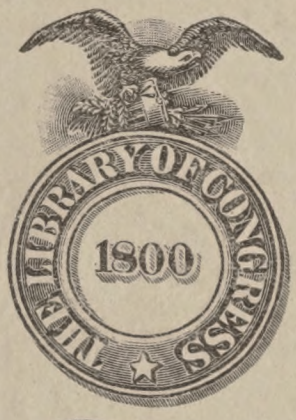


Class PZ3

Book C812 Ch

Copyright No. 2 copy 2

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

3121
ZC

A

Christmas Greeting

By

MARIE CORELLI

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1901

PZ3
.C812Ch
2
Copy 2

Copyright, 1901

DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY

All rights reserved

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,
TWO COPIES RECEIVED
NOV. 16 1901
COPYRIGHT ENTRY
Nov. 5-1901
CLASS a XXc. No.
20402
COPY A.

UNIVERSITY PRESS · JOHN WILSON
AND SON · CAMBRIDGE, U. S. A.

"A MERRY CHRISTMAS!"

B.M.P. Vol. 26, 1913

A Christmas Greeting

"A MERRY CHRISTMAS!"

IT is an old, very old, timeworn greeting, this of the friendly "Merry Christmas to you!" and there are some folks among us in these days who profess to hate the very sound of it. It came into use when England was known as "Merrie England," an appellation which seems more than singular to us who have to endure the inane dullness and melancholy stupidity of "society" as it exists in this present gloriously-progressive Motor-Era. Looking round on the tired, worn, nervous, querulous faces in the crowds that fill the streets and shops at Christmas-time, — hearing the endless complaints, the new diseases, the troubles, real and fancied, of each person who can manage to detain a friend for five minutes' hurried and morbid conversation, — reading the delectable details of suicide, murder, mania and misadventure preciously garnered up as gems of literature for the million by the halfpenny press — one may reasonably wonder

whether England was ever in truth really "merrie," as recorded. Her ancient sweet songs and ballads, her old-fashioned "Yule games" and picturesque "country dances" would appear to prove her so, — reports of the "open doors" and generous hospitality of her jolly yeomen and hunting squires in bygone days are still extant, — and it may be reasonably asked why, if she was so "merrie" once, she cannot be equally "merrie" again.

"It is a farce to wish *me* 'A Merry Christmas,'" says the pessimist — "*I* have no cause to be merry!"

Quite so! But then, my excellent friend, you must remember that all the world does not wag in your particular way! Strange, is n't it? You may possibly have thought now and then, as a self-concentrated unit, that because you are not merry (and you never will be, I fear) — therefore no one else has any right to be so. This is your little mistake! However, as it is Christmas time we will not be hard on you! You shall enjoy yourself in your own approved fashion of being miserable! No one shall interfere with you, provided you do not interfere with anyone else. Grumble away all by yourself!

"A MERRY CHRISTMAS!"

Sneer at "A Merry Christmas" — only do it alone! Curse the frost, the wind, the rain, the robins, the Christmas cards, the puddings, the mince-pies, the holly, the mistletoe (and the kisses under it!), and announce to blank space your detestation of the whole Festival! No one shall come near you, believe me, so long as you keep on your own ground and do not attempt to trespass on your neighbour's little plot of harmless enjoyment. For there are still a few of us remaining on the planet who are not absolutely and incurably selfish, — who can find their pleasure in making others happy, — who can put aside their own private griefs for the sake of cheering those who are still more grieved, — who can take delight in the laughter and merriment of children, and for whom the anniversary of Christ's birth is still a sacred day, consecrated to joy and thanksgiving. True it is that every such recurring anniversary must have its sorrowful thought or memory associated with those who are no longer here with us; true it is in very saddest earnest that the cruel grip of War has robbed many a home of its nearest and dearest, who will be missed and mourned when families gather round the Christ-

mas fire and talk of the past in low voices, with tears in their eyes — nevertheless, it is also true, thank God, that those who are gone are neither "lost" nor really "parted" from us. Possibly they are nearer to us in our lonely evenings than we know, — possibly they hear our voices, and see us as they saw us in life. We cannot tell; and as our ignorance of the Divine mysteries leaves us in doubt, let us be even as we would if our beloved ones were here, — cheerful among ourselves, and kind to all those with whom we are brought in contact.

"Ye who have scorned each other
Or injured friend or brother,
In this fast-fading year;
Ye who by word or deed
Have made a kind heart bleed,
Come, gather here!
Let sinn'd against and sinning
Forget their strife's beginning
And join in friendship now;
Be links no longer broken,
Be sweet forgiveness spoken
Under the Holly Bough!
"Ye who have nourished sadness,
Estranged from hope and gladness
In this fast-fading year;

Ye with o'er-burdened mind
Made aliens from your kind,
  Come, gather here!
Let not your useless sorrow
Pursue you night and morrow,
  If e'er you hoped, hope now!
Take heart! — Uncloud your faces,
And join in our embraces
  Under the Holly Bough!"

There is no use in grieving: — there is no sense in quarrelling: — there is no advantage in grumbling. People sacrifice both good health and good looks by constant querulousness. Suppose it *is* a "cold" Christmas, or a "damp" Christmas, or a "green" Christmas, or an "east-windy" Christmas, or an altogether meteorologically disagreeable Christmas. Well, what then? All the peevishness in the world will not alter it. Some of you who don't like it will make for Egypt or the Riviera. Much good may it do you! An Arab smell, and the "fleecing" of Cairene hotel proprietors are doubtful additions to Christmas pleasure — and the raucous cry of the *croupier* at Monte Carlo — "Faites vos jeux, Messieurs et Mesdames!" is scarcely worth crossing the Channel to hear. Perhaps, however,

it may be a satisfaction to some folks to spend their surplus cash in "furrin parts" rather than at home? If this should be the case, it will be an equal satisfaction to me to politely intimate that I consider such persons unworthy of their own matchless country. The much abused "English climate" is good enough for anybody. Every sort of "temperature" can be obtained in these favoured British Isles. If warmth, and freedom from east winds be required, it can be obtained at Penzance, Newquay, or Tenby — or better still on the lovely Irish coast at Parknasilla, where palms and tropical trees grow to perfection all winter in the open. Certainly there is no "gambling-hell" there; — there are only warm Irish hearts waiting for sympathy and comprehension, and I venture to think they merit as much good cash spent among them for their benefit as is wasted on the French, who, given the opportunity, abuse their English patrons more outrageously than any wild-headed, big-hearted Irish "agitator" that ever lived. I must confess I have no sympathy with the restless, nervous swarms of semi-lunatics ever "on the go" in search of "change," who turn their backs on Imperial

Britain at the first breath of its winter, which, taken on the whole, is a much more healthy winter than other countries are blessed with. And an "old English Yule" kept in the old English manner is not to be despised. Try it, all you who are not going abroad — you who are not only content, but glad and proud to remain in this

"Earth of Majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself;
. . . This little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea!"

Try to keep a happy and "merrie" Christmas in England — try to make it a blessed and unforgettable festival of pleasure for more than yourselves. Do some little special kindness, each one of you, unobtrusively in your own immediate neighbourhood, and never bother about the "inconvenience," or the "trouble," or the "cold."

"Cold Christmas? No!
Our Christmas is not cold;
Although the north winds blow
And pile the drifting snow,
And the beech-trees on the freezing wold
Rock sadly to and fro.

Our Christmas bears a warm, true heart,
His face is red with glee,
And he jests and laughs
And sings and quaffs —
He was never unkind to me, my love,
May he never be cold to thee!

"Old Christmas? No!
Though states and kingdoms wear,
And change and ruin grow
From ages as they flow,
He's as light of tread, as young and fair
As a thousand years ago.
The morning beams are always new
And scatter blessings free,
And the Christmas Day
Is as new as they,
He was never old to me, my love;
May he never grow old to thee!"

So runs a sweet old song, sung by a true English poet in days long ago gone by, and the clear, clean, glad and wholesome spirit of it is surely worth cherishing. Let none of us say we "hate" Christmas. Whatever our memories, bitter or sweet, they do not belong to the festival, but only to ourselves. Suppose therefore we lose sight of ourselves — our precious selves — just for once in our lives, and consider

others a little? If we do this, we shall find it easy to be "merry," easy to smile, easy to say a kind word, easy to do a kind action, easy to "bring home the holly," and very easy to hang up the mistletoe and waft a kiss from under it to any cross old boy who declines to be as happy as we would like to make him!

ENGLAND

ENGLAND

1901–1902

LIFT up thine eyes, Queen-Warrior of the world!
Stand, fearless-footed on Time's shifting verge,
And watch thy New Year's doubtful Dawn emerge
From parting clouds thick-roll'd in thunderous War!
Lo, how thy broad East reddens to thy West,
The while thy thousand-victoried flag, un-furl'd,
Waves to thy North and South in one royal fold
Of tent-like shelter for an Empire's rest;
O Queen, sword-girded, helmeted in gold,
Strong Conqueror of all thy many foes,
Look from thy rocky heights and see afar
The coming Future menacing the Past,
With clamour and wild change of present things,
Kingdoms down-shaken with the fall of kings,

But fear not Thou! Thou 'rt still the first
and last
Imperial wearer of the deathless Rose, —
Crown'd with the sunlight, girdled with the
sea,
Mother of mightiest Nations yet to be!

THE KING'S CROWN

THE KING'S CROWN

A DREAM OF THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

THE late rays of the sinking sun shot rosy lines of light through the high, painted glass casement of a quaint oriel chamber, where, on a cushion of crimson velvet, shone the Crown of a great King and Emperor. It was set there in readiness for the morrow, — when, at a stately pageant of national rejoicing, all the people would see it raised high above them as a symbol of the Throne and the glory of the land. Deft jewellers had been at work for days, burnishing its golden setting and polishing its priceless jewels, — and now, — their work completed, — they had brought it here for the night, and, to ensure perfect safety, had left it in this special place because it was more difficult of access than any other corner of the Royal palace. It was a small recess apart; — and the only door leading to it was through the "strong room," where all the gold and silver plate was kept, and where

two armed men paced up and down both day and night, keeping close watch and guard. Flashing sparkles of light twinkled every now and again from the precious stones in the Crown, as the sunset hues caught their finely-cut points and touched them into flame; and an atmosphere of silent majesty surrounded the historical emblem of earth's proudest empire, — lifeless in itself, yet having the strange power of outlasting the life of all its kings! The sun sank; its rays grew paler and dimmer, till by-and-by they faded altogether. Long shadows came, then the twilight, then the dark, and deep silence. Now and again a trumpet-call from the soldiers' quarters hard by, a bell slowly chiming the hour, or the clash of muskets outside on the courtyard, betokening a change of sentry, broke the solemn hush of night, but beyond this no human sound disturbed the solitude and obscurity of the secret nook which enshrined the Imperial Crown of a still more splendid and imperial Realm.

All suddenly, about an hour before the moon rose, a thick, almost palpable Darkness, darker than the night itself, gathered in the room and began to circle like a threatening storm around the Crown. Gradually this blackness took upon

itself shape and stature, and, rising full height, displayed the gigantic form of an Angel with sable wings, and a countenance distorted with cruelty and avarice.

"Mine is the Crown!" he said. "Mine are the People! Mine is the Land, and mine is the King!"

And as he spoke he stretched forth a hand to snatch the Royal diadem, when, like a flame breaking through the walls and floor of the oriel-chamber, a great light shone on every side, and another Angel, stately and majestic, whose snowy wings were like the early rays of the morning sun shining through white and azure, confronted that fierce Spirit of the Darkness.

"Not so!" said a voice clear as a silver clarion. "Mine is the Crown! Mine are the People! Mine is the Kingdom, and mine is the King!"

For one second of time they stood thus opposed one to the other — the country's Crown between them. Then came the flashing of a great Sword, and the Angel of darkness struck with it fiercely at his god-like rival.

"War!" he cried. "Eternal war! For all the evils of the land there shall be vengeance!"

And like a shaft of lightning through a cloud another fiery Sword parried the savage blow.

"Peace!" said the silver-sounding voice of the Angel of Light. "Glory and peace! For all the evils of the land there shall be justice!"

Then they closed and fought — those mighty, supernatural Warriors, — and in their fearful contest the air around them both grew dense and lurid, and the Crown, glittering with great gems on its crimson velvet cushion, appeared to float in a pool of blood. Closer and more terrible grew the fight, — and the evil angel, with such ferocity as only hate and cruelty can give, twice thrust his dazzling foe to the ground; — twice smote the heavenly-fair head with the great Sword that bore the words "everlasting death" upon its blade. And while they yet battled on, the moon rose, round and full, peering in upon them like a wondering white face of sad and wistful inquiry. For a moment they paused in their conflict, — and the jewels in the Crown suddenly ceased to sparkle. Five aerial forms of exquisite beauty arose from its golden circlet, lifting themselves above it like drifting wreaths of sea-mist in the radiance of the moonlight, and their voices, small and soft, yet clear as the notes of a sweet song, made music in the silence.

"I am the Spirit of the Pearl!" said one. "Through centuries of history I have seen 'Right' for-ever conquer 'Might,' and so shall it be again!"

"I am the Spirit of the Ruby!" said another. "I mark both War and Victory! From the bitter agony and labour of strong battle I have seen the birth of Love and Peace! All things, whether gentle or fierce, kind or cruel, have worked together for the good and the glory of the land;—so has it ever been, and so shall it be again!"

"I am the Spirit of the Sapphire!" said the third; "I know the movements of justice—I watch the performing of God's Will. Through light, through darkness, through gladness and sorrow, God holds His perfect way with kings and kingdoms. Strife is sharp and strong, but Truth is stronger;—so it has ever been, and so it shall be again!"

"I am the Spirit of the Emerald!" said a fourth. "Through all the history of the realm I have counted the tears of the poor, the sufferings of the weak, the griefs of the lonely, and when I set my light on the great king's brow I move him to deeds of pity and loving-kindness!

I watch the world progressing in good, — I know that there is more tenderness than wrath in humanity, — more love than hate! The Empire's glory is in deeds of mercy! So it has been before — so it shall be again!"

"I am the Spirit of the Diamond!" said the fifth, — "And wherever I shine, there, too, shines the Star of Freedom! No slave can breathe when my light sparkles in the air! Progress and Love and Wisdom spring up at my command, and naught can lessen the Crown's glory while I remain its central gem! Liberty and honour! These are the watchwords of our mighty Empire! So they have been for ages; so shall they ever be!"

Their voices ceased, and joining their delicate hands they melted into a shining circle about the Crown, — a circle of pure and penetrating light like the early sunbeams of a clear spring morning.

But the Angel of Darkness, resting on his sword, heard them and smiled — a smile darker and more implacable than any frown.

"Oh, foolish, evanescent Shapes! Oh, vain gods of perishable gems!" he cried; "How shall ye combat Me, who hold the mystic Opal! — the stone of sorrow and of death? What is

your strength against mine? Less than the strength of reeds in a swift tide, — for I am the Spirit of Mammon, and Time's great pendulum swings the hour to me! Lo, here shines the Crown's mischief! — sparkling with a thousand fires of world's wealth, world's lust, world's treachery, world's vanity! — hues of the rainbow, as fleeting as they are fair! Emblem of ruin and disaster, take Thou thy place in the Crown, and shed My light upon the great King's brow! Indestructible and terrible! — Jewel of devils and cursing, I set thee there to work My will!"

He raised on high the Opal, glittering like a foam-bell on a treacherous sea, — and then, bending his dark form above the Crown, strove to set it within that golden band. But the magic circle of fire around it grew brighter, and deeper, and wider, till it was like a flame of glory, — springing higher and ever higher, it surrounded the Angel of Light with countless arrowy beams.

"Fight on, God's Angel of the Kingdom!" said a distant Voice that echoed like thunder far away. "Fight on! Unto thee shall be given the victory!"

Then the Angel raised his sword of Light

and struck the Opal from his enemy's hand. It fell to the ground shattered to atoms, and a rushing sound as of many waters filled the air.

"New and Old are as one!" said the Voice; Past and Future are as Present! Fight on, God's Angel of the Kingdom, — for Now is the acceptable time!"

And once again those mighty Spirits fought, — and, as they crossed their mystic Swords, there came a wailing noise as of the weeping of a great multitude. Cries of passionate grief echoed up from some dismal unseen abyss of suffering, and the anguish of a great People was borne on the double rhythmic beat of a Funeral march and a Battle song. Strange gleaming visions came and went in the darkness: — women's pale faces worn with toil and sorrow; — dead soldiers slain in their youth, and lying unburied; — grim countenances of foul and lustful men, who occupied their time in digging gold out of newly-made graves, wherein the bodies had scarcely rested long enough to crumble into dust; — bold eyes of false women shining wickedly through skulls that were crowned with gems; — wide seas on which the great ships

tossed, bearing the seeds of new nations; — flashing networks of light, on which the quick news travelled in dancing letters of flame! And over all — a Cloud, — and under all — the Crown! The night hours wore away, and still the combat raged, — and still the Angel of the Darkness fought fiercely with the Angel of the Light. And the visions came and went like shadows in a magic mirror — some beautiful, some terrible, — some that were like great storms raging over the land, — some floating by in the halcyon fairness of long summer days. Now and again while that mystic flashing of Swords made luminance in the air, there came a sound of young voices singing in the distance, and the words that broke through the music were like these —

"Sheathed be the sword for ever! — let the drum
Be school-boys' pastime, — let your battles cease; —
And be the cannon's voice for ever dumb
Except to celebrate the joys of peace!
Are ye not brothers? God, whom we revere,
Is He not Father of all climes and lands?
Form an alliance, holy and sincere,
And join, join hands!"

The song died away in a tremulous wave of melody, and a pearly light began to suffuse the atmosphere like the first suggestion of the opening morn. Weary and pale, but still dauntless and unconquered, the Angel of the Light dealt stroke for stroke, blow for blow against his Enemy, when all at once, with a sudden and savage onslaught, the Angel of the Darkness caught his opponent by the arm which held the sword, and almost wrenched the dazzling weapon from his hand. And then the Angel of the Light gave a great cry of supplication.

"O God of Justice and of Love!" petitioned the silver-sounding voice; "Suffer not Thy Christian kingdom to be torn from Thy gracious protection! Clear Thou this Cloud of evil days, and take away the heavy weight of fear and of sorrow from the hearts of Thy stricken and suffering people, who do not forget Thy mercies in the past! Give Me the Crown, O God of Empires! — Give Me the King!"

And as the prayer was spoken, the Angel of the Darkness fell back, weakened and dismayed, for the heavenly Warrior, grasping his sword with redoubled force and purpose, dealt with

it one mighty stroke which brought his foe to the ground.

"Yield thou, mine Enemy!" cried the triumphant Angel; "Claim no more that which was never thine! Seek no more that which shall never belong to thee! Mine is the Crown! — mine is the Kingdom! — and mine, by the grace of God, is the King!"

The widening dawn lightened the painted windows with a silver mist, flecked through with palest rose, and the darkness, gathering together, rolled itself up like a curtain and fled away. All shapes of evil and visions of terror vanished; — and as the morning broke, the Angel of the Light, alone and victorious, with snowy wings widespread, and fair face bright with God's own eternal splendour, lifted the King's Crown in both radiant hands towards Heaven, to meet the rays of the rising sun and the full golden glory of the Day!

HYMN FOR THE CORONATION

HYMN FOR THE CORONATION

ULER of Empires, God of
Perfect Love,
That wert, and art, and evermore shalt be, —
Maker and Master of the worlds above,
Saviour of all who fix their hope on Thee, —
Hear us, great Lord of nations new and old,
Giver of blessings countless and untold, —
To-day before Thy Throne we pledge anew
Our England's trust in all things high and true,
And with united hearts to Thee we bring
Him unto whom our loyal faith is due, —
God of our fathers! Guard and bless the King!

The country's crown we set upon his brow,
With prayer, thanksgiving, and the sound of song;
Eternal King of kings, receive him now,
And fill his soul with power divine and strong;

Nerve Thou his hand unto the sceptre's sway,
Guide Thou his steps in every noble way,
And let the grace of all things sweet and fair
Descend on Her whose spirit pure and rare
For happy years the nation's pride hath been,
And now the nation's crown and throne doth share;
God of our fathers! Guard and bless the Queen!

Lord of the Past and Future, let Thy light
Shine on this double crowning of our Land!
In Peace or War, O God defend the Right
And let our shield be still Thy sheltering Hand!
Hear and accept Thy grateful people's praise
For all Thy mercies in the former days, —
For present joys, for blessings yet to be,
We humbly give the glory unto Thee,
And to Thy service we do consecrate
The Sovereigns of our Empire of the Sea!
God of our fathers! Guard and bless the State!

HYMN FOR THE CORONATION

Long live our Emperor-King and Empress-Queen!
God save them from all evils near or far!
May golden years of happiest peace serene
Make bright the sway of their Imperial star!
Before high Heaven we swear to them our faith,
Honour and truth and loyalty till death!
Courage and chivalry are with us yet, —
God shall forget us all ere We forget!
Loud let our voices with the joy-bells ring,
To all the nations here together met; —
God be with England, and with England's King!

THE SOUL OF QUEEN ALEXANDRA

THE SOUL OF QUEEN ALEXANDRA

A SPIRIT-PICTURE

AVE you seen the Queen? Thousands of eager lips voiced this question, — thousands of eager eyes were turned towards the stately towers of Westminster, rising darkly outlined like fine bronze against the cold grey sky, on that bleak and bitter feast-day of St. Valentine, 1901, when Edward VII., King of Great Britain and Emperor of India, went in state to open his first Parliament. Thousands of loving and loyal hearts, still heavy with grief for the loss of Victoria the Good, so long the Mother of her people, grew warm with tenderness and devotion as the whispered name "Alexandra!" ran from mouth to mouth, and the old fiery chant, so gloriously sung by the last great Poet-Laureate of England, came back like a wave breaking on the shore of many memories: —

" Sea-King's daughter from over the sea,
Alexandra!
Saxon, and Norman, and Dane are we,
But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee,
Alexandra!
Welcome her thunders of fort and of fleet,
Welcome her thundering cheer of the street!

. . . .

Oh, joy to the people, and joy to the Throne,
Come to us, love us, and make us your own!"

For had she not obeyed and fulfilled the Poet's invocation? Had she not, indeed, come to us, and loved us, and made us her own? And had we not taken her in all her youth and hope and beauty, and made her our own in turn? — our own Princess of Loving-Kindness, dear to all, honoured by all as one of the purest and noblest figures in all the history of English Royal annals? And so on this St. Valentine's Day of never-to-be-forgotten memory, the people gathered in multitudes to see her pass, — transformed from Princess into Queen — a change which, though always predestined, seemed at the time singular and as much attended by grief as by gladness. For she — like all the people who were one with her in truth

and loyalty to the Throne — mourned the loss of the greatest, best, and wisest Sovereign that had ever reigned in England since the days of Elizabeth, — one, who to the diplomacy, tact, and foresight of Elizabeth, had added the sweetness, gentleness, and love of a pure womanly heart, ever in sympathy with the joys and griefs of her people. Affection, curiosity, and compassion struggled for the mastery in the minds of the vast crowds that watched the progress of the gorgeous State Coach, drawn by the dainty cream ponies which had but lately, alas! drawn the dead Queen through the great city to her last rest; and people standing a-tiptoe strove to peer through the glass on all sides, not so much to catch a glimpse of the King's familiar face as to note the expression on the delicate fair features of his Consort. It was difficult to see her within the cumbrous painted and gilded equipage, — the King's brilliant uniform and glittering orders made his figure more conspicuous than hers; moreover, his features were so well known to the crowds who had long loved him as their "popular" prince, that no one was put to any great strain to recognize him. But the shrinking, graceful form at his side was less

distinct in outline — one saw a blur of sable robes and long-flowing veil, the gleam of jewels, a wistful face with soft grieved eyes, and that was all.

Inside the House of Lords, however, the impression was different. There, amid the rustle of black silken robes, and the sweep of mourning veils and funereal plumes, the glisten of diamonds, the milky sheen of pearls, and the almost startling relief of colour afforded by the scarlet robes of the Peers, came the very incarnation of majesty ; — of grief and beauty in one, when the " Sea-King's daughter " stood pale and proud beside her Husband and King, — when the Royal robes of ruby velvet and snowy ermine fell around that slight regal figure clad in solemn black, almost crushing it with a weight of splendour, and when the sweet eyes gazed out on the crowded gathering of the world's most brilliant personages of rank and influence with a gravity not unmingled with pain. A fitting partner for the Throne of the greatest Emperor on earth.

" She stood beside him like a rainbow braided,
Within some storm, when scarce its shadows
past
From the blue paths of the swift sun have faded. "

There was present one who looked upon her at that moment, and looking, saw her with other eyes than those of mere humanity, — saw her as earthly sight alone can never see her, — in the clear undarkened air of psychic vision which brings all things, all circumstances, all seeming shapes into the true prospective of the Soul's distinct and unerring observation. And in that Light she stood uplifted; — the symbols of earth's passing power and splendour were no longer visible — the crowding forms around her were as drifting shadows, dimly outlined or vanishing altogether into darker space. High above them all her Spirit rose transfigured; — revealed in its true beauty, — transformed by a Thought, — and hallowed by a Prayer! No longer robed in sombre mourning garb, her figure shone resplendent, clad in the dazzling whiteness of an Angel's wearing; — Royal robes of Heaven's imperishable gold enfolded her as with wings, — and on her brow sparkled the deathless Crown of many bravely-endured mortal sorrows turned into jewels of immortal joy! Unconscious of the living radiating light surrounding her she stood; serene and prayerful, — watchful and patient, — fearless and resigned, — loving and

true; and like the breaking of great waves upon the shifting sand, came the murmur of a mighty people's praise, — the grateful blessings of brave soldiers far away, fighting for England's honour, — the tenderness of children's love — the thankfulness of struggling souls rescued from sin and death! Pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds formed a glittering triumphal arch of rainbow hues above her, attracting with an irresistible force the unseen powers of good, which, through all clouds of doubt and chance, do yet flash their star-like rays of hope upon the world, inspiring the mind of humanity to fresh work, ambition, and endeavour. To her — a Queen of Fair Virtues — ascended the earnest, though unworded petitions of all good women for guidance and example, — to her their looks were turned for leadership through the devious and difficult ways of life, — for to them she seemed

> "Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
> Of tempest."

War or peace, — loss or gain, — defeat or victory — these earthly incidents of life passed over her as the mere brief reflex of a darkness on her brightness, and touched her not at all.

Plainly could it be seen that she had known sorrow; plainly was it evident that she had shed tears. She had clasped the Cross to her breast — she had testified her faith in God by a grand resignation to the Divine Will. But these things made the stature of her Soul so much the fairer, that such marks of pain and loss could only be perceived in her as indications of more perfect gladness. So did she shine; — pictured for a fleeting moment in the clear mirror of spiritual perception, with all the colours of unfading Truth about her, and seen, not "as in a glass darkly, but face to face," — a visible Queen indeed, of a far wider realm than Imperial Britain! For Imperial Britain may have its day like Imperial Rome — may run its course equally to decay and death, — but the Empire of love and purity, of unselfishness and goodness, of truth and kindness, is built up on eternal foundations and can never end! And within that Empire the Soul of Queen Alexandra is crowned more gloriously than with the crown of England, — from every quarter of it she commands more subjects than any earthly kingdom holds, — and those who cannot penetrate into this boundless and everlasting realm of hers, do not know her,

and cannot say they have ever looked upon her! And when the King's first Parliament was opened — when all the "great" in rank and wealth and fashion had pushed and scrambled and hustled themselves out of Westminster, commenting audibly and flippantly on the looks, manners and deportment of their Majesties, how many among them, we may wonder, had seen the veil of earthly things withdrawn and the appearance of that lovely Soul disclosed as God sees it, in all the fairest portraiture of a truly Royal Presence?

One — certainly one — out of all the brilliant assemblage had truly "seen" the Queen; — and that one who was so permitted to behold her as she actually is in the watchful sight of Heaven, remembers every line, every grace, every touch of colour and beauty in the gracious Spirit-picture, — and is glad — for England's sake!

A CHRISTMAS CAROL AT SANDRINGHAM

A CHRISTMAS CAROL AT SANDRINGHAM

REFRAIN

GOD save your gracious Majesties, —
Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day.

The gates of Heaven were opened then,
And the Herald-Angels came —
Singing "Peace on earth, goodwill to men"
In blessed Jesu's Name;
But the world is forgetting that sacred song,
Heard by the shepherds of old,
And, despite Christ's birth, there is war on earth,
And wolves in the Master's fold; —
And for this cause we are sent to you, —
To give you a word of cheer —
God save your gracious Majesties,
And send you a happy Year!

A CHRISTMAS GREETING

Three weary travellers are we,
And at your door we stand, —
We come from an Empire of the free,
A far-off Golden Land —
A Land where the dear ones you have lov'd
And lost for a parting breath,
Are as angels bright, in the perfect light
Of a life that knows no death.
In heavenly choir they sing with us,
Their voices you may hear —
"God save your gracious Majesties,
And send you a Blessèd Year!"

From your heart's gentle excellence
A welcome we would win!
We pray you send us not from hence,
But let us enter in.
Poor are our garments, — no store we keep
Of wealth for the world to see, —
But the names we bear are forever fair —
"Faith, — Hope, — and Charity!"
Sisters belov'd of Christ, we come
To sing you a carol clear, —
"God save your gracious Majesties,
And give you a Happy Year!"

Unbar to us your household gate, —
With you we seek to dwell; —
We are your Angel guards of state,
And we will shield you well!
No foes shall harm you, no ills befall,
While we in your home remain,
And the love of the grand, sweet Empire-Land
Shall glorify your reign!
May Jesu's love and peace protect
You and your children dear! —
God save your gracious Majesties
For many a good New Year!

REFRAIN

God save your gracious Majesties,
Let nothing you dismay,
'T is life to know that Christ our Lord
Was born on Christmas Day!

A QUESTION OF FAITH

A QUESTION OF FAITH

PROPOUNDED TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

BEFORE fully entering on this paper, I should like those who may be inclined to read it to understand very distinctly, once and for all, that I am a Christian. I am sorry that the too-hasty misjudgment of others compels me to assert the fact. The term "atheist" has been applied to me by several persons who should know better, — for it is an absolutely false, and I may add, libellous accusation. That it has been uttered unthinkingly and at random by idle chatterers who have never read a line I have written I can well believe, — nevertheless it is a mischievous rumour, as senseless as wicked. Poor and inadequate as my service is, and must ever be, still I am a follower of the Christian Faith, *as expounded in Christ's own words to His disciples.* I believe that Christian Faith to be the grandest and purest in the world, — the most hopeful, the most strengthening, the most

soul-supporting and ennobling religion ever taught to humanity. To me, in hours of the bitterest trial, it has proved not "a reed shaken by the wind" — but a rock firmer than the foundations of the world, against which the waves of tribulation break in vain and disperse to naught, — and when brought face to face with imminent death as I have been, it has kept me fearless and calm. I know — because I have experienced — its priceless worth, its truth, its grand up-lifting-power; and it is because this simple Christian Faith is so dear to me, and so much a part of my every-day life, that I venture to ask a few straight questions of those who, calling themselves Christians, seem to have lost sight altogether of their Master and His commands. I like people who are consistent. Inconsistency of mind is like uncleanliness of body; it breeds discomfort and disease. And in this wonderful age of ours, in which there is so little real "greatness," — when even the tried heroism of our leading statesmen and generals is sullied by contemptible jealousies and petty discussions of a quarrelsome nature, — when the minds of men are bent chiefly on money-making and mechanical

inventions to save labour (labour being most unfortunately estimated as a curse instead of the blessing it indubitably is), I find inconsistency the chief ingredient of all modern thought. Things are jumbled up in a heterogeneous mass, without order, distinction or merit. And the principal subject on which men and women are most wildly, glaringly inconsistent is that which is supposed to be the guiding rule of life — religion. I should like to try and help settle this vexed question. I want to find out what the Christian Empire means by its "faith." I want to know how our King proposes to enact his magnificent part of "Defender of the Faith." I venture to lift up my voice as the voice of one alone in the wilderness, and to send it with as clear a pitch and true a tone as I can across the sea of discussion, — the stormy ocean of angry and contradictory tongues, — and I ask bluntly and straightly, "What is it all about? Do YOU BELIEVE YOUR RELIGION, OR DO YOU NOT?"

It is an honest question, and demands an honest answer. Put it to yourselves plainly. DO YOU BELIEVE WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND SOUL IN THE FAITH YOU PROFESS TO FOLLOW?

Again — put it with equal plainness — Do YOU NOT BELIEVE ONE IOTA OF IT ALL, AND ARE YOU ONLY FOLLOWING IT AS A MATTER OF CUSTOM AND FORM?

Let us, my reader or readers, be round and frank with each other. If you are a Christian, your religion is to believe that Christ was a human Incarnation or Manifestation of an Eternal God, born miraculously of the Virgin Mary; that He was crucified in the flesh as a criminal, died, was buried, rose again from the dead, and ascended to heaven as God and Man in one, and there perpetually acts as Mediator between mankind and Divine Justice. Remember, that if you believe this you believe in the PURELY SUPERNATURAL. But let anyone talk or write of the purely supernatural as existent in any other form save this one of the Christian Faith, and you will probably be the first to scout the idea of the supernatural altogether. Why? Where is your consistency? If you believe in one thing which is supernatural, why not in others?

Now let us consider the other side of the question. You who do not believe, but still pretend to do so, for the sake of form and con-

ventional custom, do you realize what you are? You consider yourself virtuous and respectable, no doubt; but facts are facts, and you, in your pretence at faith, are nothing but a liar. The honest sunshiny face of day looks on you and knows you for a hypocrite — a miserable unit who is trying in a vague, mad fashion to cheat the Eternal Forces. Be ashamed of lying, man or woman, whichever you be! Stand out of the press and say openly that you do not believe; so at least shall you be respected. Do not show any religious leanings either to one side or the other "for the sake of custom" — and then we shall see you as you are, and refrain from branding you "liar." I would say to all, clergy and laity, who do not in their hearts believe in the Christian Faith, "Go out of the Church; stand aside and let us see who is who. Let us have space in which to count up those who are willing to sacrifice all their earthly well-being for Christ's sake (for it amounts to nothing less than this), and those who prefer this world to the next." I will not presume to calculate as to which will form the larger majority. I only say it is absurd to keep up churches, and an enormous staff of clergy, archbishops, bishops,

popes, cardinals, and the like, for a faith in which we do not TRULY, ABSOLUTELY, AND ENTIRELY BELIEVE. It is a mere pageant of inflated falsehood, and as such must be loathsome in the sight of God, — this always with the proper proviso, "if there indeed be a God." Yet, apart from a God altogether, it is degrading to ourselves to play the hypocrite with the serious facts of life and death. Therefore, I ask you again — Do you believe, or do you not believe? My object in proposing the question at all is to endeavour to show the spiritual and symbolic basis upon which the Christian Faith rests, and the paramount necessity there is for accepting it in its pristine purity and beauty, if we would be wise. To grasp it thoroughly, we must view it not as it now seems to look to us through the darkening shadows of sectarianism, BUT AS IT WAS ORIGINALLY FOUNDED. The time has come upon us that is spoken of in the New Testament, when "one shall be taken and the other left," and the sorting of the sheep from the goats has already commenced. It can be said with truth that most of our Churches, as they now exist, are diametrically opposed to the actual teachings of their Divine Founder. It

can be proved that in our daily lives we live exactly in the manner which Christ Himself would have most sternly condemned. And when all the proofs are put before you plainly, and without disguise or hyperbole, in the simplest and straightest language possible, I shall again ask you, "DO YOU BELIEVE, OR DO YOU NOT BELIEVE?" If you do believe, declare it openly and live accordingly; if you do not believe, in God's name leave off lying!

The Symbolism of the Christian Faith has been and is still very much lost sight of, owing to the manner in which the unimaginative and unthinking majority of people will persist in looking at things from a directly physical, materialistic, and worldly point of view. But if we take the life and character of Christ as a Symbolic representation of that Perfect Manhood which alone can be pleasing to God, — which alone can be worthy to call the Divine Source of Creation "Father!" — some of our difficulties may possibly be removed. Christ's Gospel was first proclaimed in the East, — and the Eastern peoples were accustomed to learn the great truths of religion by a "symbolic," or alle-

gorical method of instruction. Christ Himself knew this, — for He taught them many things by parables.

We shall do well to keep this spirit of Eastern symbolism in mind when considering the "miraculous" manner of Christ's birth. Note the extreme poverty, humility, well-nigh shame attending it! Joseph doubted Mary, and was "minded to put her away privily." Mary herself doubted the Angelic Annunciation, and said, "How shall this be?"

Thus, even with those most closely concerned, a cloud of complete disbelief and distrust environed the very thought, suggestion, and announcement of God-in-Man.

It should be remembered that the Evangelists Mark and John, have no account of a miraculous birth at all. John, supreme as a Symbolist, the "disciple whom Jesus loved," wrote, "The WORD was made flesh and dwelt among us."

Securing this symbolic statement for ourselves, we find that two of the chief things which we attach importance to in this world — namely, birth and position — are altogether set aside in this humanizing of the WORD, and are of no account whatever. And that the helpless Child

lying in a manger on that first Christmas morning of the world, was, despite poverty and humility, foredestined to possess more power than all the kings and emperors ever born in the purple.

Thus, the first lessons we get from the birth of Christ are—Faith and Humility—and these are the whole spirit of His Divine doctrine.

Now,—How does this spirit pervade our social community to-day, after nearly two thousand years of constant preaching and teaching?

Look round on the proud array of the self-important, pugnacious, quarrelsome, sectarian, and intolerant so-called "servants of the Lord." The Pope of Rome, and his Cardinals and his Monsignori! The Archbishop of Canterbury, and *his* Bishops, Deacons, Deans and Chapters, and the like! The million "sects"—and all the cumbrous paraphernalia of the wealthy and worldly "ordained" to preach the Gospel! Ask them for "proofs" of faith! For signs of "humility"! For evidences of any kind to show that they are in very soul and life and truth the followers of that Master who never knew luxury, and had not where to lay His head!

And you, among the laity, how can you pray, or pretend to pray to a poor and despised "Man of Sorrow," in these days, when with every act and word of your life you show your neighbours that you love Money better than anything else in earth or in heaven!—when even you who are millionaires only give and do just as much as will bring you notoriety or purchase you a "handle" to your names! Why do you bend your hypocritical heads on Sundays to the Name of "Jesus," who (so far as visible worldly position admitted) was merely the son of a carpenter, and followed the carpenter's trade, while on week-days you make no secret of your scorn of, or indifference to the "working-man," and more often than not spurn the beggar from your gates!

Be consistent, friends!—be consistent! IF YOU BELIEVE IN CHRISTIANITY, you must also believe in these three things:—

1. The virtue of poverty.
2. The dignity of labour.
3. The excellence of simplicity.

Rank, wealth, and all kinds of ostentation should be to you pitiable—not enviable.

IS IT SO? Do you prefer poverty with a pure conscience to ill-gotten riches? Would

you rather be a faithful servant of Christ or a slave of Mammon? Give the answer to your own soul,—but give it honestly—if you can!

If you find, on close self-examination, that you love yourself, your own importance, your position, your money, your household goods and clothes, your place in what you call "society," more than the steady working for and following of Christ,—YOU ARE NOT A CHRISTIAN. That being the case, be brave about it! Say what you are, and do not pretend to be what you are not!

It ought to be quite easy for you to come to a clear understanding with yourselves. Take down the New Testament and read it. Read it as closely and carefully as you read your cheap newspapers, and with as much eagerness to find out "news." For news there is in it, and of grave import. Not news affecting the things of this world, which pass like a breath of wind and are no more,—but news which treats of Eternal Facts, outlasting the creation and re-creation of countless worlds. Read this book for yourselves, I say, rather than take it in portions on Sundays only from your clergy,—and devote your earnest attention to the simple precepts uttered by Christ

Himself. If you are a Christian, you believe Christ was an Incarnation of God,—then does it not behove you to listen when God speaks? Or is it a matter of indifference to you that the Maker and Upholder of millions of universes should have condescended to come and teach you how to live? If it is, then stand forth and let us see you! Do not attend places of worship merely to be noticed by your neighbours. For, —apart from such conduct being strictly forbidden by Christ,—you insult other persons by your presence as a liar and hypocrite. This is what you may call a "rude" statement; plain-speaking and truth-telling are always called "rude." You will find the utmost plain-speaking in the Gospels upon which you profess to pin your faith. If you have any "fancy Ritualism" lurking about you, you will discover that "forms" are not tolerated by the Saviour of mankind.

"All their works they do for to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments."

"Shows" of religion are severely censured and condemned by Him whose commands we assume to try and obey, — we can scarcely find even a peg whereon to hang an excuse for our

practice of praying in public, while "vain repetitions" of prayer are expressly prohibited. We shall find nothing in the New Testament to condone the "evening dress" services of a certain West-end clergyman, who shall be nameless; — or to countenance "dramatic" recitations from the steps of a Church chancel, by an actress standing boldly there with her back to the Communion Table. I repeat — Read the Four Gospels; they are very much mis-read in these days, and even in the Churches are only gabbled. See if your private and personal lives are in keeping with the commands there set down. If not, cease to play Humbug with the Eternities; — they will avenge themselves upon your hypocrisy in a way you dream not of! "Whosoever excuses himself accuses himself."

The true Christian faith has no dogma, — no form — no sect. It starts with Christ as God-in-man, in an all-embracing love for God and His whole Creation, with an explicit and clear understanding (as symbolized so emphatically in the Crucifixion and Resurrection) that each individual soul is an immortal germ of life, in process of eternal development, to which each new "experience" of thought, whether on this planet

or others, adds larger powers, wider intelligence, and intensified consciousness. There are no "isms" in this faith — no bigotry, and no intolerance. It leaves no ground for discussion.

"This is my commandment, — That ye love one another as I have loved you."

It is all there, — simple, straight, and pure — no more, no less than this.

"Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of trouble, attempts what is above its strength, pleads no excuse of impossibility. It is, therefore, able to undertake all things, and it completes many things and warrants them to take effect where he who does not love would faint and lie down. Love is watchful, and, sleeping, slumbereth not. Though weary, it is not tired; though alarmed, it is not confounded, but, as a lively flame and burning torch, it forces its way upwards, and securely passes all. . . . Love is born of God and cannot rest but in God, above all created things."

Is OUR Gospel of modern life and society today one of love or hate? Do we help each other more readily than we kick each other down? Are we more eager to say kind things of each other or cruel? Do we prefer to praise or to

slander our neighbours? Is it not absolutely true that "a cruel story runs on wheels, and every hand oils the wheels as they run?" Can we leave anybody alone without covert or open detraction from his or her merits? Even in the most ordinary, every-day life do we not see people taking a malicious, insane delight in making their next-door neighbours as uncomfortable as possible in every petty way they can? These persons, by the way, are generally the class who go to Church most regularly, and are constant Communicants. Do they not by their profane attempt to assimilate the malignity of their dispositions with the gospel of Christ, deserve to be considered as mere blasphemers of the Faith?

Yet, as a matter of fact, it is much easier to love than to hate. Love is the natural and native air of the immortal soul. "While we fulfil the law of love in all our thoughts and actions, we cannot fail to grow." Hatred, discontent, envy, and pessimism cramp all the higher faculties of the mind, and very often actually breed disease in the body. To love all creation is to draw the responsive health and life of creation into one's own immortal cognizance. "Love easily loosens all our bonds. There is no discomfort that will

not yield to its sovereign power." But it must not be a selfish love. It must be that Love which is the key-note of the Christian Faith — "Love one another as I have loved you."

It follows very plainly that if we truly loved one another there would be no wars, no envyings, no racial hatreds, no over-reaching of our brethren for either wealth, place, or power. There would be no such hells as the Lancashire factories, for example, where, as Allen Clarke graphically tells us,[1] "Amidst that sickening jerry-jumble of cheap bricks and cheaper British industry, over a hundred thousand men, women, and children toil and exist, sweating in the vast, hot, stuffy mills and sweltering forges — going, when young, to the smut-surrounded schools to improve their minds, and trying to commune with the living God in the dreary, dead, besmirched churches and grimy puritanical chapels; growing up stunted, breeding thoughtlessly, dying prematurely, knowing not, nor dreaming, except for here and there a solitary one cursed with keen sight and sensitive soul, of aught better and brighter than this shrieking, steaming sphere of slime and sorrow." Contrast this picture with a crowded "supper

[1] "Effects of the Factory System." — Allen Clarke.

night" at the Carlton or any other fashionable Feeding-place of London, and then maintain, if you dare, that the men and women who are responsible for two such differing sides of life are "Christians."

England is, I am told, at the present juncture in danger of becoming "Romanized." Priests and nuns of various "orders," who have been thrust out of France and Spain for intermeddling, are seeking refuge here, in company with the organ-grinders and other folk who have been found unnecessary in their own countries. From Paris official news was cabled on September 11th as follows:—

JESUIT EXODUS FROM FRANCE.

PARIS, Wednesday, *September 11th.*

It is announced officially that by the 1st of next month not a single Jesuit will be left in France. Most of them are emigrating to England, and will make Canterbury their headquarters. — DALZIEL.

France will not have the Jesuits; may it be asked why we are to have them? It is England's proud privilege to be an international workhouse for all the decrepit of the world, and for this cause a happy hunting ground is open to Rome

among these same decrepit. There is no creed in the world which is better adapted for those who are morally weak and frightened of themselves. All the millionaires who have gotten their goods by fraud, can, by leaving the greater part of these goods to Rome, secure a reserved seat in Rome's Heaven, with a special harp and crown. All the women with "soul-affinities" other than lawful, can, after a considerable wallow in social mire, enter the Church of Rome, and after confession, be "cleansed" sufficiently to begin again a new life approved of the saints. All the spiritualists and faith-healers can find support for their theories with Rome, — and the Roman hell, full of large snakes and much brimstone, is a satisfactory place to consign one's enemies to, when we have quite put aside Christ's command, "Love one another." Altogether Romanism is calculated to appeal to a very large majority of persons through the sensuous and emotional beauty of its ritual; — it is a kind of heavenly narcotic which persuades the believer to resign his own will into the hypnotic management of the priests. The church is made gorgeous with soft lights and colours, — glorious music resounds through the building, and the

mind drowses gently under the influence of the Latin chanting, which we need not follow unless we like, — we are permitted to believe that a large number of saints and angels are specially looking after us, and the sweet Virgin Mary is ever ready with outstretched hands to listen to all our little griefs and vexations. It is a beautiful and fascinating creed, hallowed by long antiquity, graced by deeds of romance and chivalry, sanctified by the memories of great martyrs and pure saints, and even in these degenerate days, glorified by the noble-hearted men and women who follow it without bigotry or intolerance, doing good everywhere, tending the sick, comforting the sorrowful, and gathering up the little children into their protecting arms, even as Jesus Himself gathered them. It would need an angel's pen dipped in fire to record the true history of a faithful, self-denying priest of the Roman Church, who gives up his own advantage for the sake of serving others —who walks fearlessly into squalid dens reeking with fever, and sets the pure Host between the infected lips of the dying, — who combats with the Demon of Drink, and drags up the almost lost reprobate out of that horrible chasm of vice and destruction.

No one could ever give sufficient honour to such a man for all the immense amount of good he does, unostentatiously and without hope of reward. But many men like himself exist equally in the English Church as the Roman, — in the Presbyterian Church, in the Greek Church, in the Buddhist temples, among the Quakers, "Plymouth Brethren," and other sects — among the followers of Mahomet or of Confucius. For there are good men and good women in every Church, faithful to the SPIRIT OF CHRIST, and therefore, "Christians," even if called Jews or Hindoos.

Personally, I have no more objection or dislike to Romanism than I have to any other "ism" ever formulated. From a student's point of view I admire the Roman Catholic priesthood, because they understand their business, and thoroughly know the material with which they have to deal. Wise as their Egyptian prototypes of old, they decline to unveil "mysteries" to the uninitiated vulgar — therefore the laity are not expected to read the Bible for themselves. Knowing the terrors of a guilty conscience, they are able to intimidate the uneducated ruffian of both sexes more suc-

cessfully than all the majesty of the law. Thoroughly aware of the popular delight in "shows," they organize public processions on feast days, just as the "Masters of the Stars" used to do in Memphis, where, by the way (as those who take the trouble to study ancient Egyptian records will discover), our latest inventions, such as the electric light, the telephone, the phonograph, and many other modern utilities were used by the priests for "miraculous" effects. From the Egyptian priesthood we derive the beginnings of scientific discovery; — to the early Roman Catholic priesthood we owe the preservation of much history and learning. The one is, intellectually speaking, a lineal descendant of the other, and both deserve the utmost respect for their immense capacity as Rulers of the Ignorant.

The greater majority of persons have no force of will and no decided opinions, but only an undersense of coward fear or vexation at the possible unsuccessful or damaging result of their own ill-doings. Hence the power of the Roman Catholic dogma. It is not Christianity, it has not the delicate subtlety of Greek mythology, it is simply Pagan Rome engrafted on the con-

version and repentance of the Jew, Peter, who, in the time of trial, "knew not the Man." Curiously enough, it is just the "Man," the real typical Christ, the pure, strong God-in-humanity who is still "not known" in the Roman Catholic ritual. There are prayers to the "Sacred Heart" and to other physical attributes of Jesus, — just as in old Rome there were prayers to the physical attributes of the various deities, but of the perfect "Man," as seen in Christ's dauntless love of truth and exposure of shams, His scourging of the thieves out of the holy temple, His grand indifference to the world's malice and hatred, and his conquest over death and the grave, — of these things we are given no clear or helpful image. Nevertheless, it is the "Man" we most need, — the "Man" who came to us to teach us how to live; — the brother, the friend, the close sympathizer, — the great Creator of all life mingling Himself with his human creation in a beautiful, tender, loving, wise, and all-pitiful Spirit, wherein is no hate, no revenge, and no intolerance! This is the Christ; — this is His Christianity. Romanism, on the contrary, allows plenty of space for those who want to

hate as well as to love, and it is as helpful or as useless as any of the thousand and one dogmas built up around Christ which include bad passions as well as divine aspirations. The danger of such a creed gaining too much ground in England, the land where our forefathers fought against it and trampled it out with their own blood and tears, is not because it is a particular form of religious faith, but because it is an intolerant system of secret government. This has been proved over and over again throughout history. Its leaders have not shown themselves as gentle as pagans by any means, either now or in the past, and intolerance in any form, from any sect, is no part of the Constitution of a free country.

Hence the real cause of the objection entertained by millions of persons in the Empire to the suggested alteration of the King's Coronation oath. Edward VII. is a Constitutional monarch, — and the words "Defender of the Faith" imply that he is equally Defender of the Constitution. He agrees, when he is crowned King of England, to uphold that Constitution, — he therefore tacitly rejects all that might tend to undermine it, all secret

methods of tampering with political, governmental, or financial matters relating to the State. The wording of the Coronation Oath is and must be distinctly offensive to thousands of excellent persons who are Roman Catholics, — nevertheless, in the times when it was so worded, the offending terms were made necessary by the conduct of the Roman Catholics themselves. Those times, we are assured, are past. We have made progress in education, — we are now broad-minded enough to be fair to foes as well as to friends. We should, therefore, in common courtesy to a rival Church, consent to have this irritating formula altered. Perhaps we should, — but is it too much to ask our Roman Catholic brethren that they also, should, if they wish for tolerance, exhibit it on their own side? When our good and beloved Queen Victoria died, was it not quite as offensive on the part of Pope Leo to publicly state that he "could not be represented at the funeral of a Protestant Queen" — as it may be for our King to publicly repudiate the service of the Mass? Nothing could have been more calculated to gratuitously wound the feelings of a great People than that most unnecessary an-

nouncement made from an historical religious centre like the Vatican at a time of universal grief for the death of a great Monarch. If the Pope's act was according to the rule of his Church, the King's oath will be taken according to the rule of the British Constitution. No one could accuse the Pope of any particularly "Christian" feeling in declining to be represented at the last obsequies of the best Queen that ever reigned — no one can or will accuse King Edward of "religious intolerance" if he takes the oath as it is set down for him. Both acts are matters of policy. When we have the foremost peer of England, the Duke of Norfolk, forgetting himself so far as to drag his religious creed into the political arena and express the hope on behalf of all English Catholics that the Pope may soon regain temporal power (which means, to put it quite plainly, that the British Constitution should be disintegrated and laid under subjection to Rome), the natural consequence of such conduct is that an enormous majority of perfectly sensible, broad-minded people doubt whether it is wise to leave an entirely loose rein on the neck of the papal Pegasus, and whether it will not be as

well, after all, to allow the Coronation oath to be spoken by Edward VII. as Victoria, of ever glorious memory, spoke it? For tolerance and equity on the one side must be met by tolerance and equity on the other, if a fair understanding is to be arrived at. And when the professors of any religious Creed still persecute heroism and intellect, as personated in the grand and venerable figure of Tolstoy, or refuse reverence to the last rite of a noble Queen, whose reign was a blessing to the whole world, one may be permitted to question their fitness for the task of elevating and refining the minds and morals of those whom their teachings help to influence. And having, as a man of intellectual and keen perception, the full consciousness that such unuttered "questioning" was burning the hearts and minds of thousands, Cardinal Vaughan showed himself a master of the art of Roman Catholic diplomacy in his speech at Newcastle-on-Tyne on September 9th. Speaking of the inrush of Roman Catholic priests into England, he said: —

"A statement from a London paper has been running through the provincial Press to the effect that I have deliberately outraged public

feeling by inviting to England certain French religieux, some of those *confrères* who have made themselves particularly obnoxious by their constant attacks upon this country. The fact is that, upon the passing of the iniquitous law against the religious congregations, I gave a general invitation to any religieux who might wish to come to my diocese until they could return to France. Among those who applied were three or four fathers, some of those *confrères* who do not love England. My invitation being general, I was not, and am not going to make distinctions. None will come who do not intend to obey the laws and follow my direction. And if there be any who have not been sufficiently enlightened to appreciate this country while living in France, they are the very people who had best come and make our acquaintance. This is the surest way to change their views. But while England boasts of her generous hospitality to every kind of refugee, I shall certainly offer whatever hospitality I can to the men and women who have suffered for Christ's sake. *I am too broad an Englishman to know any other policy.*"

"Broad Englishman" as the Cardinal may

be, he had no pity on the aged Dr. St. George Mivart, the circumstances of whose treatment are not yet forgotten.

Speaking of the King's oath, the Cardinal said — "I entirely and frankly accept the decision of the country that the King must be a Protestant. They believe that this is in some way bound up with the welfare of the Empire. WITHOUT GOING THIS LENGTH, I am convinced that in the present condition of the English people, HAUNTED AS THEY ARE BY FEARS AND SUSPICIONS, it is expedient that the King should be of the religion of the overwhelming majority. Besides, the King being, in virtue of Royal supremacy, head of the State Church, it is impossible that he should be other than a Protestant. Catholics have no difficulty in paying most loyal allegiance to a Protestant Sovereign. In this they seem to be of more liberal and confiding temper than those who would refuse allegiance to a King unless he professed their creed. The Catholic has no difficulty, because he gives his allegiance and his life, when needed, primarily to the civil power ordained of God."

(The Cardinal did not pause here to try and explain why God has "ordained" a Protestant

sovereign instead of a Roman Catholic one. Yet no doubt he will admit that God knows best.)

"The Sovereign REPRESENTS THIS POWER, whatever be his religion. Was it not Catholic Belgium that placed the Protestant King Leopold upon the Throne, and gave to him at least as hearty a devotion as ever has been shown to his Catholic successor? Other Catholic States are ruled by Protestant Sovereigns. And who can say that the 16,000,000 of German Catholics are a whit less loyal to their German Protestant Emperor than the millions who are of the Protestant or of no religion? There are people, I believe, pursued by the conviction that we Catholics would do anything in the world to get a Catholic King upon the Throne; that the Pope would give us leave to tell lies, commit perjury, plot, scheme, and kill to any extent for such a purpose; that there is no crime we should stick at if the certainty, or even the probability of accomplishing such an end were in view. Now let me put it to our Protestant friends in this way. If the King of England were an absolute Monarch, the dictator of the laws to be enacted, and his own executive, there might be something of vital importance to our

interests and to those of religion to excite in us an intense desire to have a Catholic King. Though even then the end could never, even remotely, justify the means suggested. But how do matters really stand? We have a constitutional Monarch who is subject to the laws and in practice bound to follow the advice of his Ministers. A Catholic King, under present circumstances, would be a cause of weakness, of perpetual difficulty, and of untold anxiety. We are far better off as we are. Our dangers and grievances, our hopes and our happiness, LIE IN THE WORKING OF THE CONSTITUTION, not in the favour or power of any Sovereign. IT IS THE PARLIAMENT, THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, THAT WE MUST CONVERT, or at least strive to retain within the influence of Christianity. For the well-being of this country and the salvation of its people depend, above all other human things, UPON THE VIEW THAT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS CAN BE GOT TO TAKE OF ITS DUTY — to respect and obey the law of Christ. What we want is to get the House of Commons to maintain the Christian laws of marriage as the basis of society, and to secure to parents and their children a true and proper liberty in the matter

of Christian education. And in this, remember well THAT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DEPENDS NOT UPON THE KING, WHATEVER HIS RELIGION, BUT UPON OURSELVES. The people of this country must work out their own salvation. And here let me point out to you, in passing, that THE NEXT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT MAY SETTLE FOR EVER THE POSITION OF CHRISTIANITY IN THIS COUNTRY. Secondary and middle-class education will be thrown into the melting-pot. In the process of the devolution of educational authority upon county councils, Christianity will run the risk of losing rights which it seems to have almost secured under the working of the Education Department. The adoption of a single clause or principle will have far-reaching and most vital results. There will be another educational struggle. Struggles will be inevitable until the Christian cause, which is becoming more and more openly the cause of the majority, has permanently triumphed.

Here we have four distinct "moves" on the plan of campaign.

1. "It is the Parliament, the House of Commons, that we must convert."

This means that wherever influence can be brought to bear on the return of Roman Catholic members to the House, that influence will not be lacking.

2. "The next Session of Parliament may settle for ever the position of Christianity in this country."

Not CHRISTIANITY, my lord Cardinal! — for that is above all "settling," — save with its Founder — but that the next Session may open the way to a more complete Roman Catholic domination is what you venture to hope and to work for.

3. "The adoption of a *single clause* or principle will have far-reaching and most vital results."

Precisely; — so far-reaching and vital that England must be on her guard against even a "single clause or principle" which endangers the liberty of the subject.

4. "Struggles will be inevitable until the Christian cause, which is becoming more and more openly the cause of the majority, has permanently triumphed."

For Cardinal Vaughan there is only one "Christian" cause — viz., the Roman Catholic, and he who runs may read the meaning of the above phrase without much difficulty.

Concerning the King's Declaration Oath, said the Cardinal: —

"It is not the King who is responsible for the drafting or the retention of this detestable Declaration. It is the Ministry, the Legislature, the Constitution that are responsible for its retention, and for forcing its acceptance upon the Sovereign. The gravamen, therefore, lies against the State, not against the person of the King."

Quite true; and it is therefore against the State that the Vatican powers must and possibly will be directed.

"And," went on the Cardinal, "do not devout clergymen swear every day in good faith to teach the Thirty-nine Articles, and find every day that conscience and good faith compel them to break their engagement by submitting to the Catholic Church? When a man fully realizes that by a promise or an oath he has pledged himself to something that is unjust, immoral, untrue, the engagement ceases to bind."

Ergo, the English Church, the particular

"Faith" which our King undertakes to DEFEND, is "unjust, immoral, and untrue."

And, "Could Englishmen see themselves as others see them, they would be more chary than they are of provoking hatred by such wanton contempt for the feelings of other nations."

Well, Englishmen have every chance of seeing themselves as others see them, when they hear a "Christian" Cardinal accusing them of "wanton contempt for the feelings of other nations." To whom do other nations turn in want or distress but England? From whom do the famine and fever-stricken in all corners of the world obtain relief? England! Where is there any Roman Catholic country that has poured out such limitless charity and pity to all in sorrow as England? And why should the "conversion of England" be so valuable to the Roman Church? Merely because of England's incalculable wealth and incalculable power! Again, concerning the Declaration Oath, the Cardinal continued: — "Now, should it ever happen that the King became convinced, by God's grace, of the truth of the doctrines that he abjured, of what value would be the Declaration? Absolutely none!"

Of course not, — he would simply cease to be King, and would enjoy the complete liberty of the subject.

"By all means," went on his Eminence, warming with his theme, "let the majority, if it please, stand by the law, which exists apart from the Declaration, declaring that to reign over England the Sovereign must be a Protestant. Retain this law and enforce it; but respect our creed, at least just so far as to ignore it, and to leave us alone. This, surely, is not a heavy demand to make upon the spirit of modern toleration."

Then will *you* not, my lord Cardinal, "respect the creed" established in this country, — the religion of the State, — "just so far as to ignore it," and to leave those who honour it "alone." "This, surely, is not a heavy demand to make upon the spirit of modern toleration." It is not the Church of England which has started any discussion on the Coronation Oath, — the quarrel has emanated entirely from the Roman Catholic side. And the Cardinal's speech tends to be more aggressive than pacifying.

"But if," he continues, "after all, there must be a Declaration *as a sop to certain fears and passions*, let there be one to the effect that the

King is a Protestant — and stop there. Should, however, a denunciation of the Catholic religion be added to a profession of Protestantism, the whole world will understand it; it will understand it as a pitiable *confession of English fear and weakness.* And as to ourselves; well, we shall take it as a complimentary acknowledgment by our fellow-countrymen of the importance and power of faith — that it can not only remove mountains, but is capable of *moving even the fabric of the British Empire itself.* But I should like to conclude in another strain, and add to these observations a resolution to this effect:— That the Sovereign of this Empire ought to be raised high above the strife of all political and religious controversies, the more easily to draw to himself and to retain the unabated loyalty of all creeds and races within his Empire."

With the latter part of the Cardinal's harangue every one of every creed and class will agree, but "a pitiable confession of English fear and weakness" is a phrase that should never have been uttered by an Englishman, whether "broad" or narrow, cardinal or layman. "English fear and weakness" has never yet been known in the world's history. And as for

" moving the fabric of the British Empire," that is only to be done through the possible incompetence or demoralization of its own statesmen, — by shiftiness, treachery, and corruption in State affairs — and even at this utmost worst, though England might be bent, she would never be broken.

But all this has nothing to do with the Christian faith as Christ Himself expounded it in His own commands. Quarrels and dissensions are as far from the teaching of the Divine Master as an earth's dusthole is far from the centre of the sun. Differences of dogma are not approved in His eyes. Whether candles shall or shall not be set on the altar, whether incense shall or shall not be burnt, may be said to relegate to the " cleansing of the outside of the cup and platter," and are not a vital part of His intention — for He has nothing but condemnation for " forms " and " ceremonies." And, on this very point, I venture to say that if the rumour be correct that incense is to be used at the Coronation of our King and Queen, it will be a most unwise and unpopular procedure on the part of any bishop or archbishop who sanctions it. Incense in itself is harmless

enough, though it has a somewhat sickening odour, — it has been burnt and swung in censers from time immemorial at all the pagan altars of the world, — in Babylon and Nineveh, in Tyre and Sidon, in Pompeii and Herculaneum, — it has smoked itself up to the gods Bel and Osiris, it has been used at the "services of Venus" and the shrines of Apollo and Jupiter, Buddha, Siva, and countless deities, as well as on the sacrificial stones consecrated to the worship of the Israelitish Jehovah, — but it is not a part of Christian worship. And when it is taken into due consideration that the use of it at the Coronation will indubitably offend and irritate thousands of the King's most loyal subjects, it should most assuredly be entirely avoided. There is something very strange and unnatural in the provocative spirit which is at present being exercised by professing rulers of the Church of England against one another; and there is matter too for regret in the attitude of favour maintained by Lord Salisbury towards the practices of an almost theatrical Ritualism in the form of English Christian services. Can it be possible that the Premier meditates "going over" to Rome? His appointments of High Churchmen to im-

portant bishoprics would seem to imply that his mind is trending that way ; certainly the simple and unaffected man of pure taste and dignity in Church ritual does not appeal to him, and that he is preparing the way for a second Cromwell is only too evident. It is lamentable indeed that any discussions should arise between the different sects as to "forms and ceremonies," and those men who excite fanatical hatreds by their petty quarrels over unimportant "shows" and observances are criminally to blame for any evils that are likely to ensue. What Christ commands is "Love one another;" — what He desires is that all mankind should be friends and brothers in His Name. And it is from this point of view that I again ask the question of those who may have glanced through this paper — DO YOU BELIEVE, OR DO YOU NOT BELIEVE? Are you a CHRISTIAN? Or a SECTARIAN? The one is not the other.

For my own part I would desire to see all the Sects cease their long quarrel, — all "dogmas" dropped — and all creeds amalgamated into one great loving family under the name of Christ. I should like to see an end to all bigotry, whether of Protestantism against Roman-

ism, or Romanism against Protestantism, — a conclusion to all differences — and a Universal Church of simple Love and Thanksgiving, and obedience to Christ's own commands. "Temporal power" should be held as the poor thing which it is, compared to Spiritual power, — for Spiritual power, according to the Founder of the Christian Faith, is the transcendent force of Love — love to God and love to man, — that "perfect love which casteth out fear," and which, being "born of God, cannot rest but in God above all created things."

Thus it follows—That if we hate or envy or slander any person, WE ARE NOT CHRISTIANS.

If we prefer outward forms of religious ceremonial to the every-day practice of a life lived as closely as possible in accordance with the commands laid down for us in the Gospel, WE ARE NOT CHRISTIANS.

If we love ourselves more than our neighbours, WE ARE NOT CHRISTIANS.

If we care for money, position, and the ostentation attending these things, more than truth, simplicity, and plain dealing, WE ARE NOT CHRISTIANS.

These ordinary tests of our daily conduct are

quite enough to enable us to decide whether we are or are not of the faith. If we are *not*, we should cease to "sham" that we *are*. It will be far better for all those with whom we are brought in contact. For, thank God, there exist thousands of very real "Christians"—("by their fruits ye shall know them") — doing unostentatious good everywhere, rescuing the lost, aiding the poor, comforting the sick, and helping the world to grow happier and better. They may be *called* Jews or Baptists, Papists or Buddhists,— but I hold them all as "Christians" if they perfrom those good deeds and live those good lives which are acceptable to Christ; while many church-going hypocrites called "Christians," whose social existence is a scandal, whose dissipations, gross immoralities and pernicious example of living are open dangers to the whole community, do not deserve even such a complimentary term as "pagan" applied to them. For the pagans — aye, the earliest savages — believed in Something higher than themselves; but these sort of people believe in nothing but the necessity of getting what they want at all costs, and are mere human warts of evil, breeding infection and pestilence. And it is particularly incumbent on the

clergy of all denominations at the present juncture to sift Themselves as to their calling and election while sifting others, — to ask themselves whether they may not be in a great measure to blame for much of the infamy which reeks from our great cities,—for much of the apathy and indifference to that bitter poverty, that neglected suffering which often gives birth to Anarchy,—for much of the open atheism which shames the upper classes of society. Let them live such lives as may liberate them from all fear or hesitation in speaking out boldly to the souls they have in charge—let them " preach the Gospel " as they were commanded, rather than expound human dogmas. Sympathy, tenderness, patience, love for all living creatures, rejection of everything that is mean and cruel, false and cowardly, —a broad mind open to all the beautiful and gracious influences of Nature—a spirit uplifted in thanksgiving to the loving God of all worlds who is brought close to us and made the friend of man in the Divine Personality of Christ—this surely is CHRISTIANITY—a Faith which leaves no corner anywhere for the admission of hate, dissension or despair. Such is the Faith the Master taught, saying :—

A QUESTION OF FAITH

[1] "I have not spoken of myself, but of the Father which sent me; He gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak.

"And I know that His commandment is life everlasting—whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father taught me, so I speak."

So He speaks—but do we listen? And if we listen,—and believe,—why do we not obey?

[1] John xii. 49.

THE VOICE IN THE CATHEDRAL

THE VOICE IN THE CATHEDRAL

WITHIN the old cathedral,
At the hour of evening prayer,
When the golden tubes of the organ
Poured music on the air,
I knelt alone in the shadow
Of the twilight grey and dim,
Dreamily, drowsily hearing
The sound of the choristers' hymn —
I heard it, but scarcely listened,
For I was in misery,
Not even the glorious music
Had power to comfort me.

The mighty chorus deepened
And rolled through the arches wide,
Till softer, softer growing,
With one faint chord it died;
Then, solemnly and grandly,
Clear on the sudden calm,
Came floating a Voice — one only,
Like an Angel's singing a psalm —

A Voice so pure and tender,
So rich and loving and low,
That it touched my heart like an echo
From the land of long ago.

My slumb'ring soul was wakened
As that voice fell on my ears;
My stubborn pride was conquered
And quenched in grateful tears;
My sorrows fled as Winter
Flies from the smile of May,
And my feeble heart was strengthened
For the dangers of my way.
O Voice divine, though human!
O matchless power of Song!
I shall hear you in my spirit
And love you my whole life long!

THE GHOST IN THE SEDAN-CHAIR

THE GHOST IN THE SEDAN-CHAIR

IT is a very old Sedan-Chair, — "genuine old" — not the manufactured antiquity of the second-hand dealer. I bought it for very little money at a sale of the furniture and effects of an historical manor-house, and though much was told me about the manor-house itself, nobody could tell me anything about the chair. It might have always belonged to the manor, — and again it might not. It was cumbrous, and in these days, said the brisk auctioneer who was entrusted with the sale, quite useless. True. Yet somehow I took a singular fancy to it. I did not actually want it, — and yet I felt I must have it. My wish was very easily gratified, for no one competed in the bidding for such an out-of-date piece of property. It was knocked down to me at a small figure, and in the course of a few days took up a corner in my drawing-room, where, owing to the sixteenth-century style of that apartment, it looked, and

still looks, quite at home. It has taken kindly to its surroundings, and in Spring-time, when we set the first blossoms of the almond-tree in a tall vase within it, so that the sprays push out their pink flowers through the window-holes, it presents an almost smiling appearance. It is made of polished wood and leather, and has at one time been somewhat ornately gilded, but the gold is all tarnished save in one or two small corners at the carved summit of the door, and the leather is badly rubbed and worn. Inside it is in somewhat better condition. It is lined with crimson silk stuff, patterned with gold fleur-de-lys; and the padded cushions are still comfortable. The door has a wonderfully contrived brass catch and handle, really worth the attention of a connoisseur in such things, and when it is shut some skill is required to open it again. In fact you must "know the trick of it" as they say. There were great ructions one afternoon when a "smart" man, down for the day from London, entered the chair, sat down, and banged that door to on himself. He smiled happily for a few minutes, and waved his hand condescendingly through the window-holes to a group of admiring friends, — but when he tried to get out and could

not, his smile promptly vanished. His friends laughed, — and that irritated him; he was being made ridiculous, and no man can endure a joke which affects his *amour-propre*. I was hastily called for to set him at liberty, and as I did the old chair creaked, as much as to say "I told you so! Can't abide your modern young man!"

I was thinking of this incident the other evening, when sitting by a sparkling fire of pine logs, and watching the flames reflected in the shining copper projections of the open Tudor grate; I presently raised my eyes and looked towards the chair.

"We must fill it with bright holly for Christmas," I said to myself half aloud; "and hang just one little bunch of mistletoe tied with white ribbon over the door, for the sake of all the pretty women who may have been carried in it long ago!"

The pine logs spluttered and crackled, — one fell apart and leaped into a flame, and the gleam and flicker of it caught at the remaining bits of gold on the carving of the Chair, and lit up its faded crimson lining, and as I sat quietly looking at it in a sort of idle abstraction and reverie, it seemed to me as though the sparkling reflec-

tion of the fire on its cushions looked like the bright waves of a woman's hair. All at once I jumped up quite startled — some one laughed! — yes, laughed, — quite close to me, — and a very pretty rippling laugh it was. My heart beat quickly, — yet scarcely with alarm so much as surprise. I listened attentively — and again the sweet laughter echoed on the silence. Surely — surely it came from — yes! — from the Sedan-Chair! I looked — and rubbed my eyes violently to make sure I was not dreaming — looked again, and there — there, as distinctly as the Chair itself, I saw Some-One sitting inside — a very fascinating Some-One with a fair face, a bewildering tangle of golden curls, blue eyes, rosy cheeks and dancing dimples, dressed in the most becoming little low-necked muslin frock imaginable!

"Why!" I stammered. "Who — what — how did you get in there?"

The Some-One smiled, and looked more bewitching than ever.

"I am very often in here," replied a soft voice, "only I am not always in the humour to make myself visible. I am the Ghost of an Old-Fashioned Girl!"

I stared at the lovely spectre, stricken dumb, not by fear, but by admiration. "If all ghosts are like this one," I thought, "we really cannot have too many of them about, especially at Christmas-time!" It was such a charming ghost! so unlike the usual sort of creeping-shivery thing which is supposed to haunt old houses and frighten harmless children! It had such beautiful clear eyes,—such a radiant smile!—and such a pretty pout came on the rosy lips when, receiving no answer, it suddenly said with an air of graceful petulance,—

"Dear me! Now I have told you who I am, you don't seem a bit glad to see me? You ought to be, you know!—for I am quite a harmless Ghost—really I am! I would n't frighten you for the world! But you *would* buy my Chair!—and of course I like to come and sit in it now and then, and think about old times!"

I began to recover myself from the shock of surprise the fascinating appearance had given me, and I said in a faint voice,—

"Oh, is that it! The Sedan-Chair—"

"Is mine!" said the Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl; "or rather it used to be mine when I lived in the world and went about in it

to balls and parties, you know! I can't help having a little tenderness for it, because it is so very closely associated with my happy life on earth. Now please don't stand looking at me so strangely! Sit down, and let us have a little chat in the firelight, won't you?"

What a sweet voice this Ghost had to be sure! What a delightfully coaxing way of looking and speaking! I could not resist the appealing, half playful glances of her eyes, so I obeyed her suggestion and went back to my seat by the fire, whereupon the Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl straightway opened the door of the Sedan-Chair and showed me her entire self, dressed apparently for a Christmas-party. Her white muslin frock was simply hemmed at the bottom, and had three little tucks in it — she wore small low shoes with elastic crossed over fine openwork white stockings — her pretty rounded arms were veiled, but not disguised, by black lace mittens, and her waist was quite carelessly tied in with a narrow strip of blue ribbon. But all this extreme simplicity only served to show the exquisite beauty of her lovely neck and shoulders, which rose out of the little muslin bodice like sculptured snow,

and one little wicked knot of violets fastened with a quaint pearl brooch against the beautiful bosom, was enough to make the coldest anchorite forget his prayers and compose a love-sonnet immediately.

"Well!" said the Ghost after a pause, "how do you like me?"

"Very much!" I answered promptly; "I have never seen anyone so pretty as you are in my life!"

The Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl smiled, and drawing out a small fan with delicate mother-of-pearl sticks, unfurled it and put it coquettishly before her face.

"That is what all the gentlemen used to say to me when I went about in this Chair," she observed, "and then they would put their declarations in the lining."

"In the lining?" I echoed. "You mean —"

"The lining of the Chair," she explained. "There are some little secret pockets in it — have n't you found them yet? Oh, you must look for them when I am gone — there is one very deep pocket just behind my head under a big golden fleur-de-lys. My first real proposal was put in that!"

"And did you accept it?"

"Yes," said the Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl, smiling, "and he and I were married, and lived sixty years together!"

"Dear me!" I ejaculated. "And he —"

"He is very well, thank you!" said the Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl. "Quite as young as when I first met him, — and so am I!"

I had no words ready with which to reply to this astonishing statement. The Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl folded up her little fan and pressed its tip meditatively against her lips.

"You see we *really* loved each other," she said with emphasis, "and so of course we *have* always loved each other! And as a natural result we *shall* always love each other!"

"Yes, — I understand —" I murmured vaguely.

"No, you don't!" said the Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl quickly; "though perhaps I should n't say that, because it sounds rude, — but I am afraid, you know, that you *don't* quite see the point! The world has lost a number of good things since I was a girl in it, — and one of these good things is real, true love!"

"I don't think you should say that!" I replied warmly; "I am sure people love each other quite as much as they ever did."

The Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl shook her fan at me.

"Not a bit of it!" she declared. "You know they don't, — so don't pretend they do!"

I was silent. I felt that it was perhaps not advisable to enter into argument with a visitor who knew the secrets of the next world.

"They *can't* love each other as they used to," went on the Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl; "the modern ways of the world won't give them either the time or the opportunity. It is all rush, rush, hurry, and scramble; — and I'm sorry to see that the men love themselves better than their sweethearts. In my day it was quite different; men loved their sweethearts better than themselves!"

"But you had not much liberty in your day, had you?" I asked timidly.

"Quite as much as was good for me, or for any of us," replied the Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl. "We stayed in the dear old homes of our childhood content to make them happy by our presence, — till our destined lovers came

and found us and took us away to other homes, which they had worked for, and which we tried to make as pleasant and sweet as those we had left. Home was always our happiest and dearest place. But the girls of to-day don't care for simple home lives. What do they know about making the best jams in the country, the finest elder wine or cider? What do they know about the value of lavendered linen? What do they care about tidiness, economy, or cleanliness? Pooh! They want change and excitement all the time!"

"That's true!" I said. "But then, you see, woman's education is much enlarged and improved —"

"Education that makes a woman prefer hotels and restaurants to her own home is not education at all," said the Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl, with a decided nod of her pretty head. "Oh dear! What a pity it is! — what a pity! It makes me quite sad to think of all the happiness women are losing!"

She gave her little muslin skirts a soft shake, and settled herself more cosily in the Sedan-Chair.

"I remember," she said, and her voice was as sweet as that of a bird in Spring-time — "I

remember going in this very Chair to a grand Court ball in London. I danced with the Royal party in 'Sir Roger,' and I was one of the belles of the evening. I was dressed very much as I am now, and none of the girls there had anything better or more showy, — but their admirers were legion, and any of them could have married well the very next day, not because they were rich, for many of them were poor, but just because they were sweet, and innocent, and good. None of them would have thought of spoiling their fresh faces with paint and powder — that was left to what were called 'women of the town!' None of them ever thought of drinking wines or spirits. None of them ever spoke or laughed loudly, but comported themselves with gentleness, unselfish kindness, and grace of manner. And will you tell me that things are just the same now?"

Her eyes met mine with a penetrating flash.

"No, they are not the same," I said; "you would not wish the world to stand still, would you? Girls have progressed since your day!"

She nodded gravely.

"Yes? Tell me how!"

"Well, for instance —" and I sought about

desperately in my mind for examples of woman's progress — "for instance, they enjoy greater freedom. They get more open-air exercise. They play tennis and golf and hockey with the men —"

The Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl gave a slight, a very slight and not unmusical giggle.

"Yes! I have seen them at it, and very ugly they look. But their sports *do* develop muscle — very unbecomingly in the neck! — and they *do* induce the growth — of horribly large hands and feet! Oh yes! Let's have some more Progress!"

A trifle disconcerted, I went on.

"Then they cycle —"

Here the Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl put up her fan again.

"Pray! — pray!" she remonstrated — "I really must ask you to consider me a little, and avoid any conversation that borders on impropriety!"

"Impropriety!" I echoed aghast. "But all the girls cycle —"

"That is to say," said the Ghost with asperity, "that all the girls have become shameless enough to sit astride on a couple of wheels and

thus expose themselves to the gaze of the public. A hopeful state of things, truly! Well! Give me some more Progress!"

"Then," I said, "there are plenty of girls who smoke and drive motor-cars, and bet on horse-races and gamble at 'Bridge.' *You* may object to this sort of thing, being so much behind the age, — but after all you must own that it brings them into free and constant companionship with the other sex."

"It does!" said the Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl decidedly; "and such free and constant companionship breeds contempt on both sides! Now let me tell you something! Do you know what all the best men like most?"

I laughed and shook my head in the negative.

"They like what they cannot get!" said the Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl emphatically. "They like what is as unlike themselves as possible, and what will never be like themselves! The woman who is *half* a man will never be truly loved by a *whole* man — remember that!"

Again she settled her pretty muslin skirts, and nodded her fair head, "sunning over with curls," well out of the interior of the Sedan-Chair.

"In the old unprogressive days," she said, "we certainly did not have much liberty. We were held as too precious and too dear to be allowed to straggle about by ourselves like unvalued tramps in the highways and byways. We stayed very much in our own homes, and were proud and pleased to be there. We helped to make them beautiful. We loved our old-fashioned gardens. We played 'battledore and shuttlecock,' which is exactly the same as your 'Ping-Pong' — save that you have a net in the middle of the table and play with balls — and we tossed our shuttlecocks up to the blue sky. We walked and rode, and found in these two exercises quite sufficient relaxation as well as development for our bodies, which, if you will please to remember, are not intended to be in the least like the bodies of men, and are by no means fitted for masculine gymnastics. We had neither cycles nor motors, we did not smoke, drink, bet, or gamble, — but — we were the models of womanliness, goodness, and purity for all the world! — and — we were loved!"

"And love was quite sufficient for you?" I asked hesitatingly.

"Of course! Love was sufficient, and is

sufficient always for every woman when it *is* love; — but you have to be quite sure about it!"

"Ah, yes!" I said, "very sure!"

The Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl peered at me with a saucy air.

"Do you know how to make sure?" she asked.

"No!"

Her lips parted in a gay little chuckle of laughter.

"Then you must find out!"

Provoking Old-Fashioned Girl! I sprang up and made a step towards her, but her fair face seemed to be growing indistinct, as if about to disappear.

"Oh, don't go!" I cried, "don't go away, dear Old-Fashioned Girl! Do stay a little!"

The pretty eyes sparkled out again, and the winsome features shone forth once more from the interior of the Sedan-Chair.

"What is the use of my staying?" she demanded. "You live in the age of progress. I 'm not wanted!"

"But you *are* wanted!" I declared. "The world wants you! Anyhow, *I* want you. Come and spend Christmas with me!"

Did ever any Ghost in any legend wear such an enchanting smile as lighted up the dream-face of the Old-Fashioned Girl as she heard this impulsive invitation? Stretching out a little hand as white as milk — and I noticed there was a tiny blue forget-me-not ring on it — she said, —

"Yes, I *will* spend Christmas with you! If you will fasten a bunch of mistletoe on the door of my dear old Sedan-Chair on Christmas Eve, I will come and bring you a bundle of pleasant thoughts and merry fancies in exchange! And the best advice I can give you is to be 'Old-Fashioned' — that is, to love home more than 'gadding,' — peace more than strife, — friendship more than 'society,' — simplicity more than show, — cheerfulness more than pride, — truth more than distinction, — and God more than all! Good-night, my dear! Good-bye!"

"Wait, wait!" I exclaimed, loth to lose sight of the pretty face, the sweet eyes, the happy smile — "Just one thing I want to ask you — only one thing!"

The Ghost paused, and turned its fair head round in a glamour of soft radiance like melted moonbeams.

"Well, what is it?"

"Just one thing I want, only one thing!—Oh, dear Old-Fashioned Girl, tell me!—when you lived in this world, so changed and so much sadder and colder since your time—who were you?"

The Ghost of the Old-Fashioned Girl laughed musically.

"Why a simple nobody, my dear! Only your great-great-grandmamma!"

The door of the Sedan-Chair shut with a slight bang,—and almost I expected to see a couple of spectral "bearers" take it up with its lovely ghostly occupant, and carry it away altogether out of my drawing-room to some unknown region of faery. But no! The fire burned up bright and clear, and the flames of the pine-logs danced merrily on the Chair as before, catching at the tarnished gold and gleaming on the faded crimson lining, but the Old-Fashioned Girl had gone, as completely as she has vanished from the social world of to-day. Remembering what she had said about the mysterious secret pocket behind one of the patterned fleur-de-lys, I advanced cautiously, put my hand through one of the window-holes, and felt about

to see if I could find it. Yes! — there it was! — and while groping doubtfully in it, my fingers came in contact with a bit of crumpled paper. Tremblingly I drew it out, — it brought with it a scent of old rose-leaves and lavender, — and hurrying back to the hearth I knelt down and examined it by the glow of the fire. Something was written on it in faded ink, and after poring over it for a minute or two, I was able to make out the words:

"My own little Sweetheart, I love you for yourself alone, believe me, and I will always love you till — "

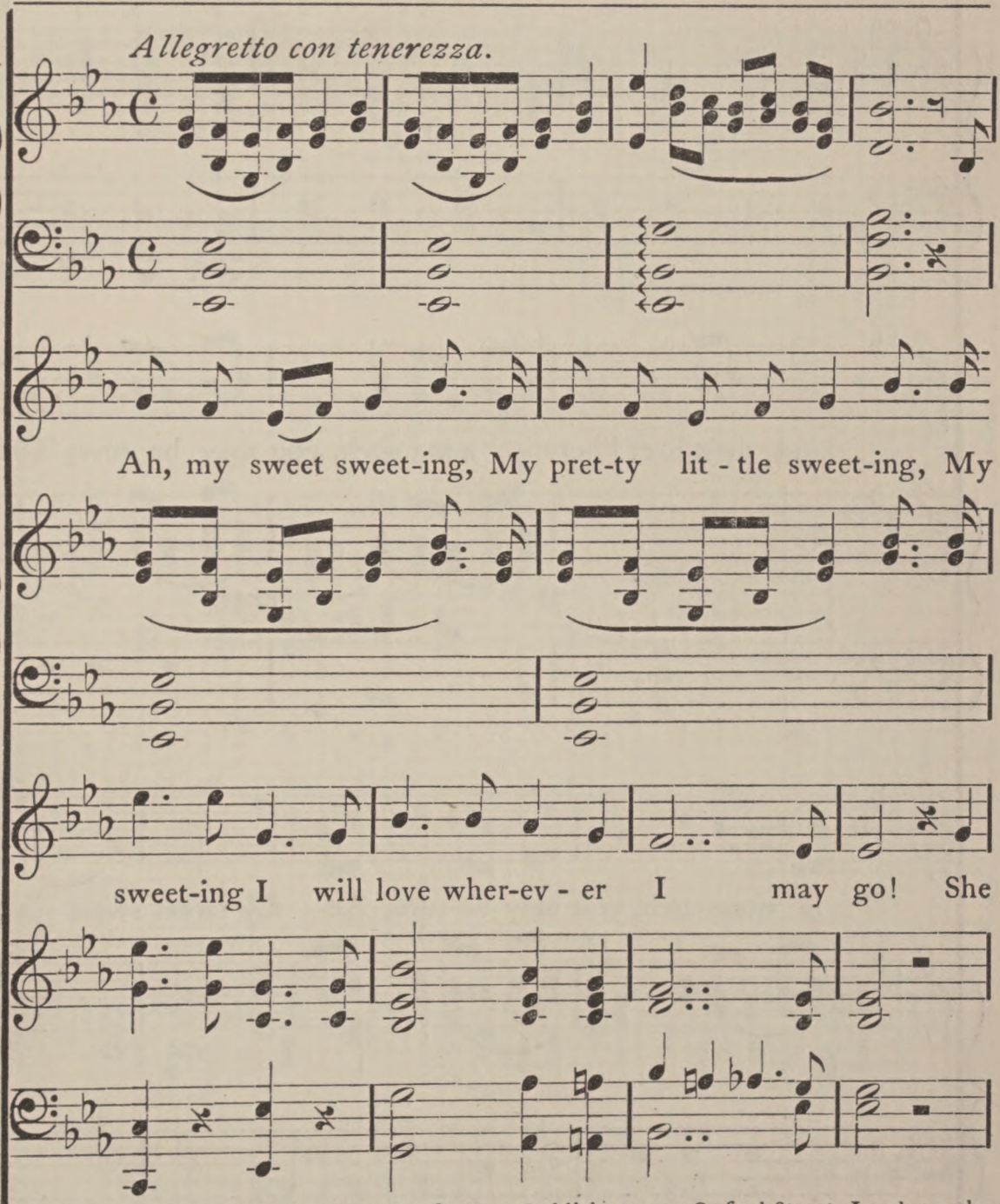
I looked up. I thought I heard the old chair creak! Had my great-great-grandmamma come back to catch me reading what was perhaps one of her love-letters? No — she was not there. But I fancy I know now why she haunts the Sedan-Chair, and as she is a relative of mine, I shall certainly expect her to stay with me at Christmas and help me to begin the New Year in a real "Old-Fashioned" way, — with home-contentment, love, and peace!

KING HENRY'S LOVE-SONG

KING HENRY'S LOVE-SONG[1]

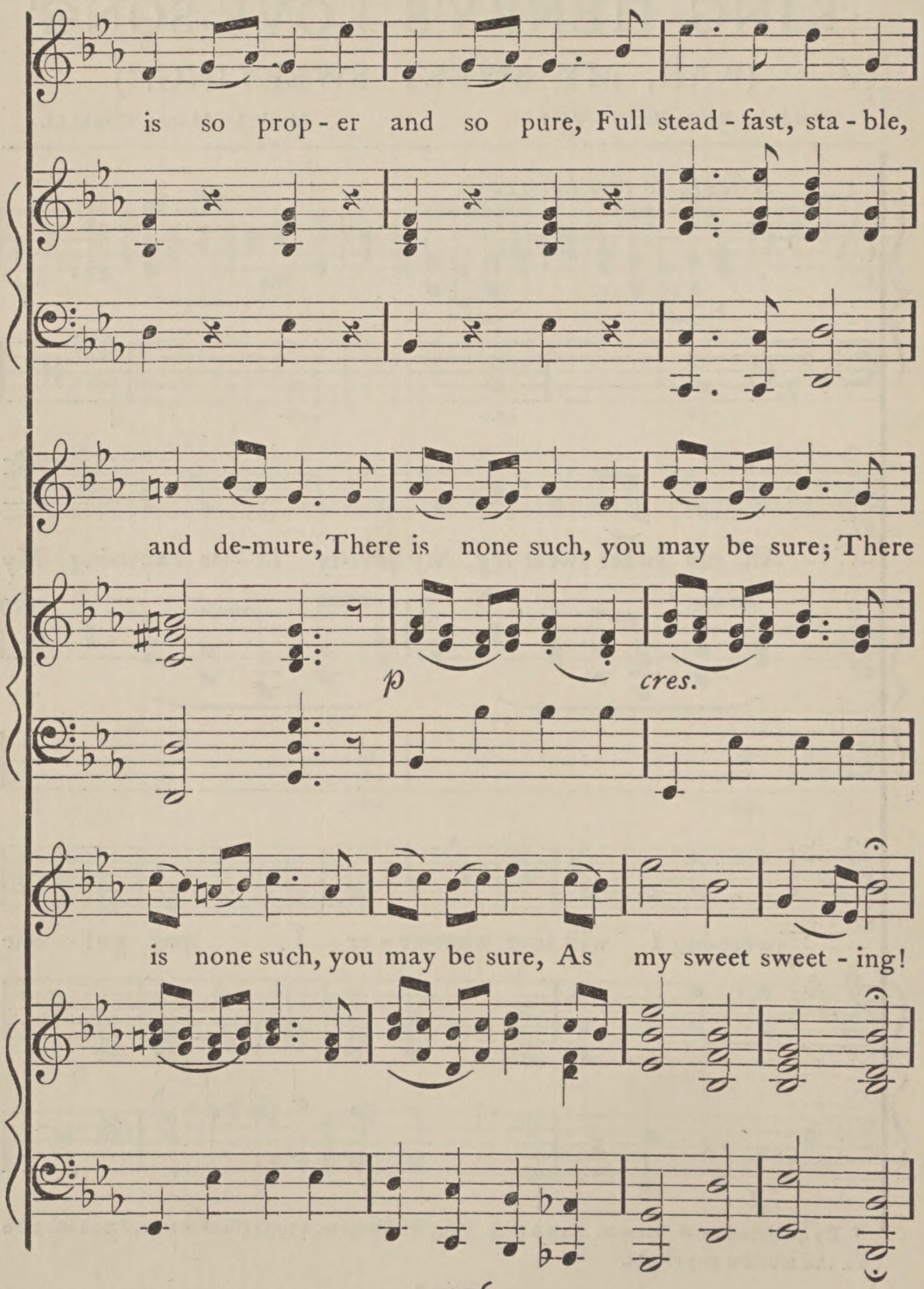
("AH, MY SWEET SWEETING.")

Words by KING HENRY VIII. Music by MARIE CORELLI.

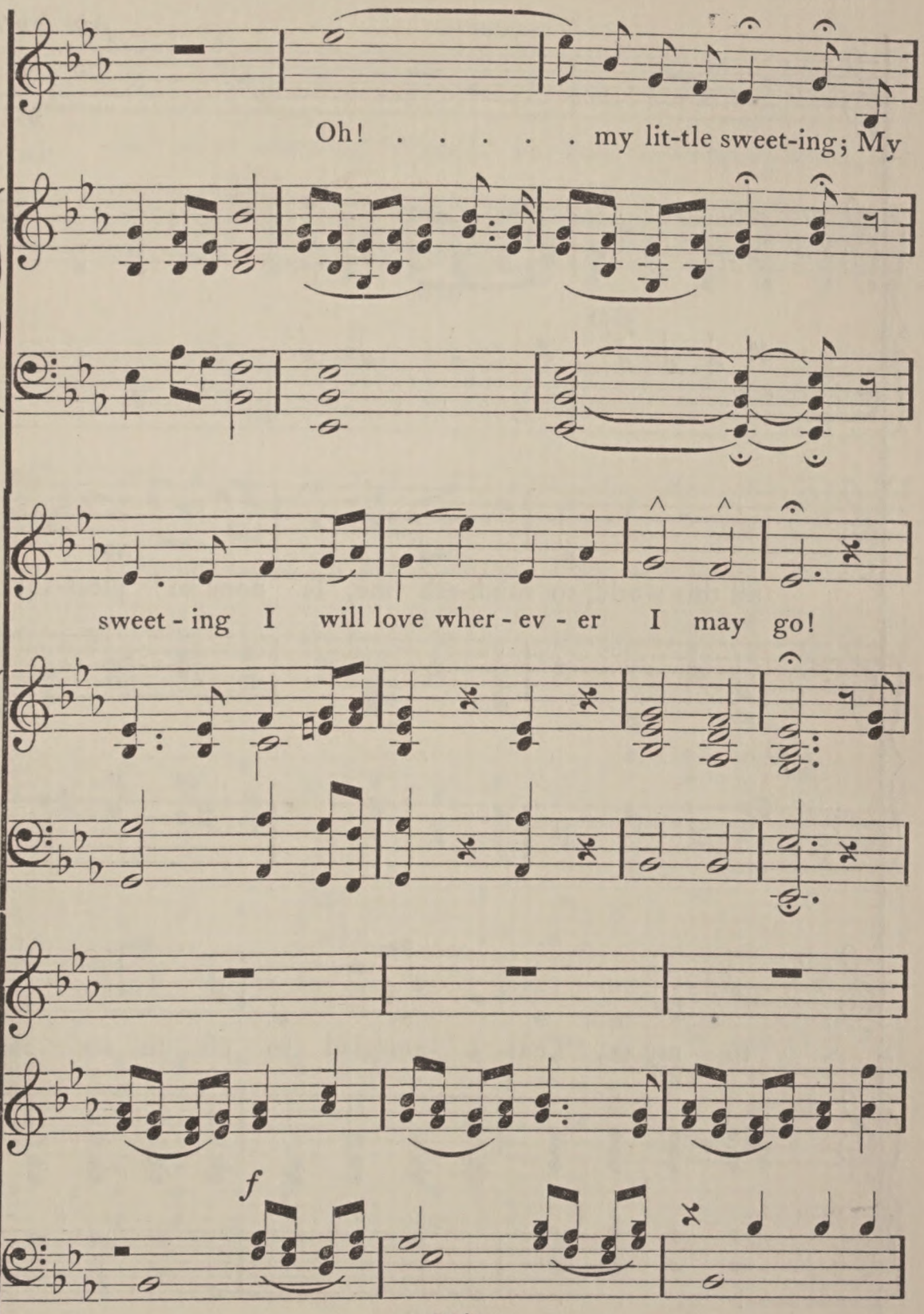


1 By permission of Messrs. LANDY & Co., Publishers, 139 Oxford Street, London, who own the musical copyright.

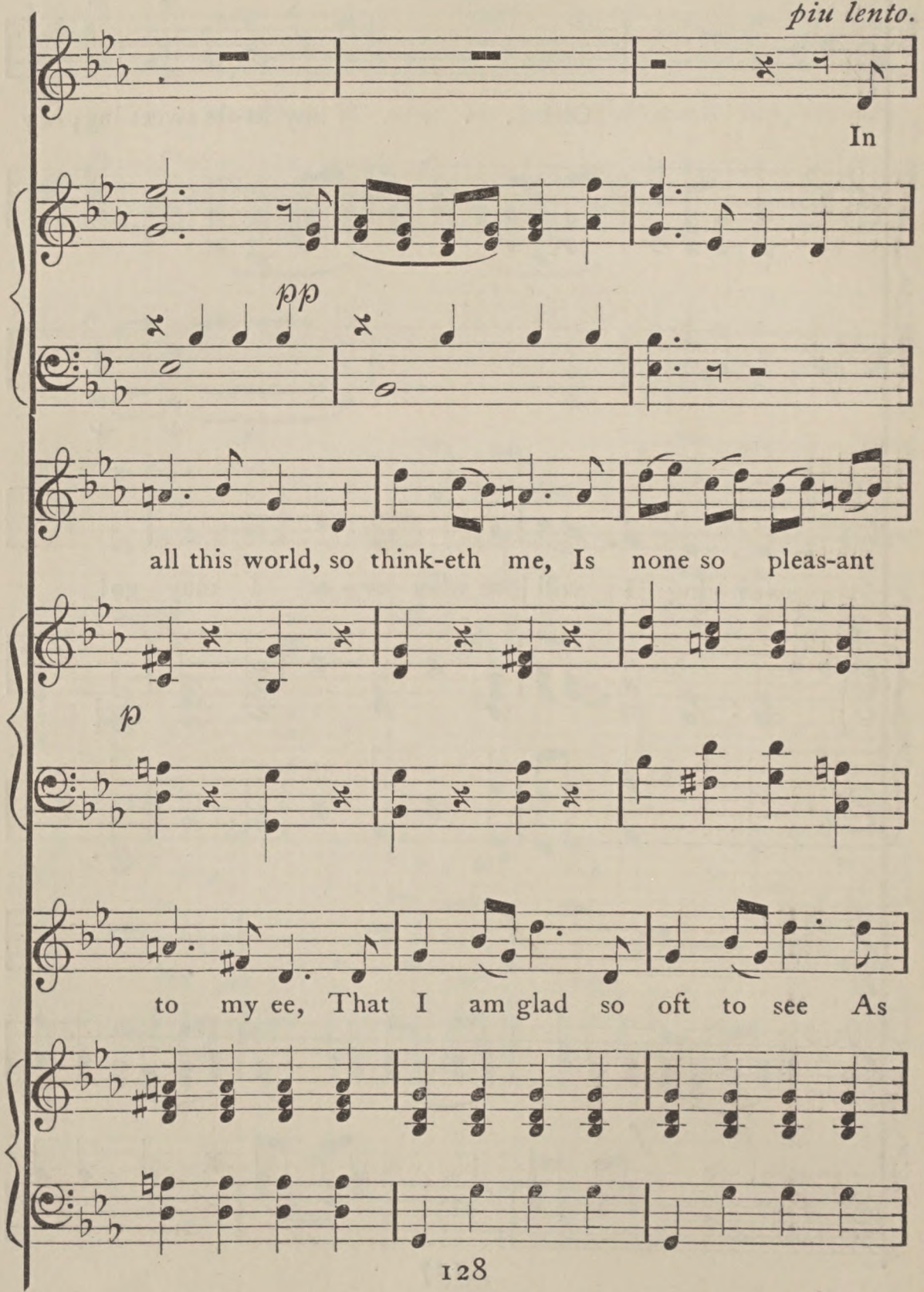
A CHRISTMAS GREETING

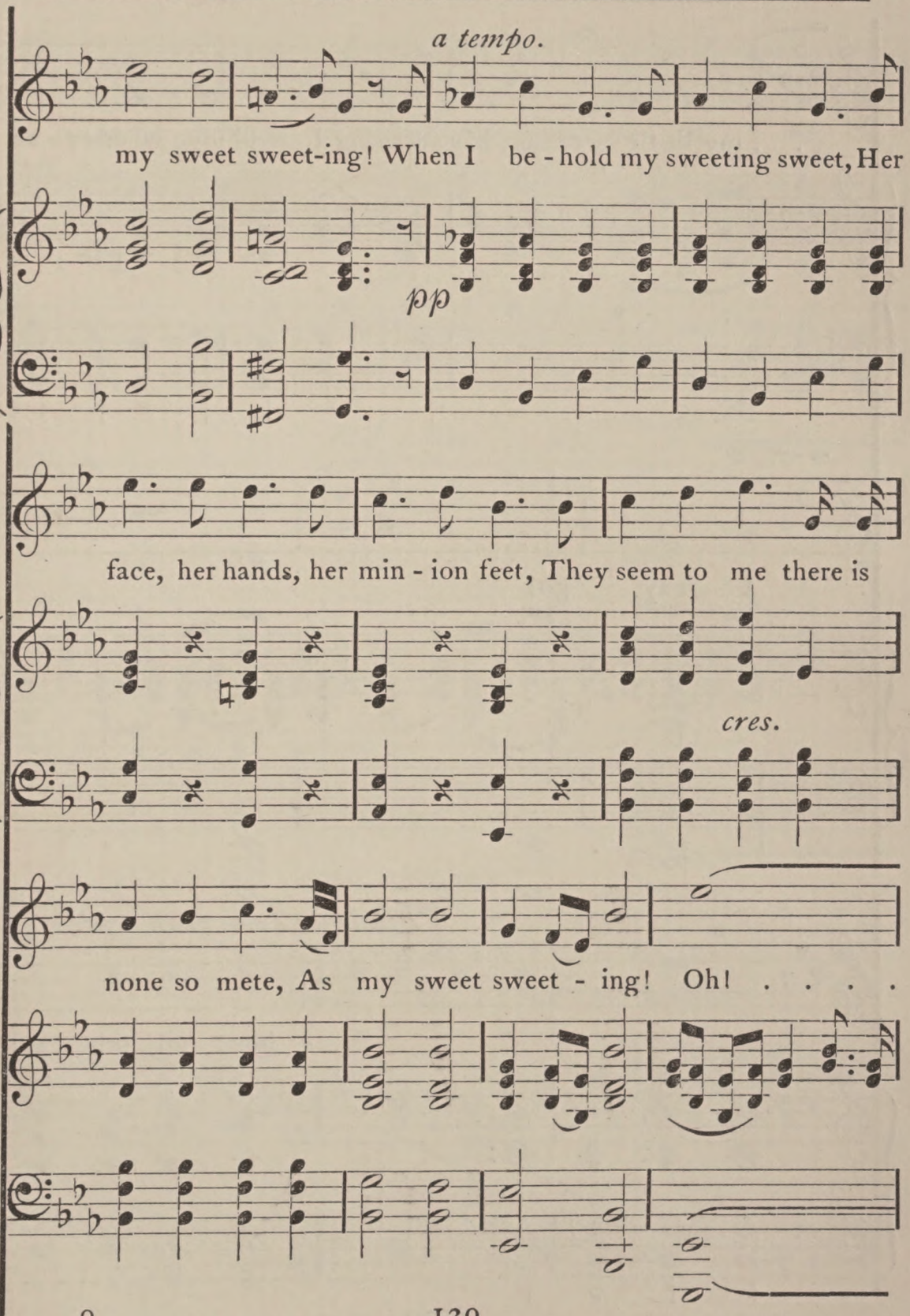

is so prop - er and so pure, Full stead - fast, sta - ble,
and de-mure, There is none such, you may be sure; There
p
cres.
is none such, you may be sure, As my sweet sweet - ing!

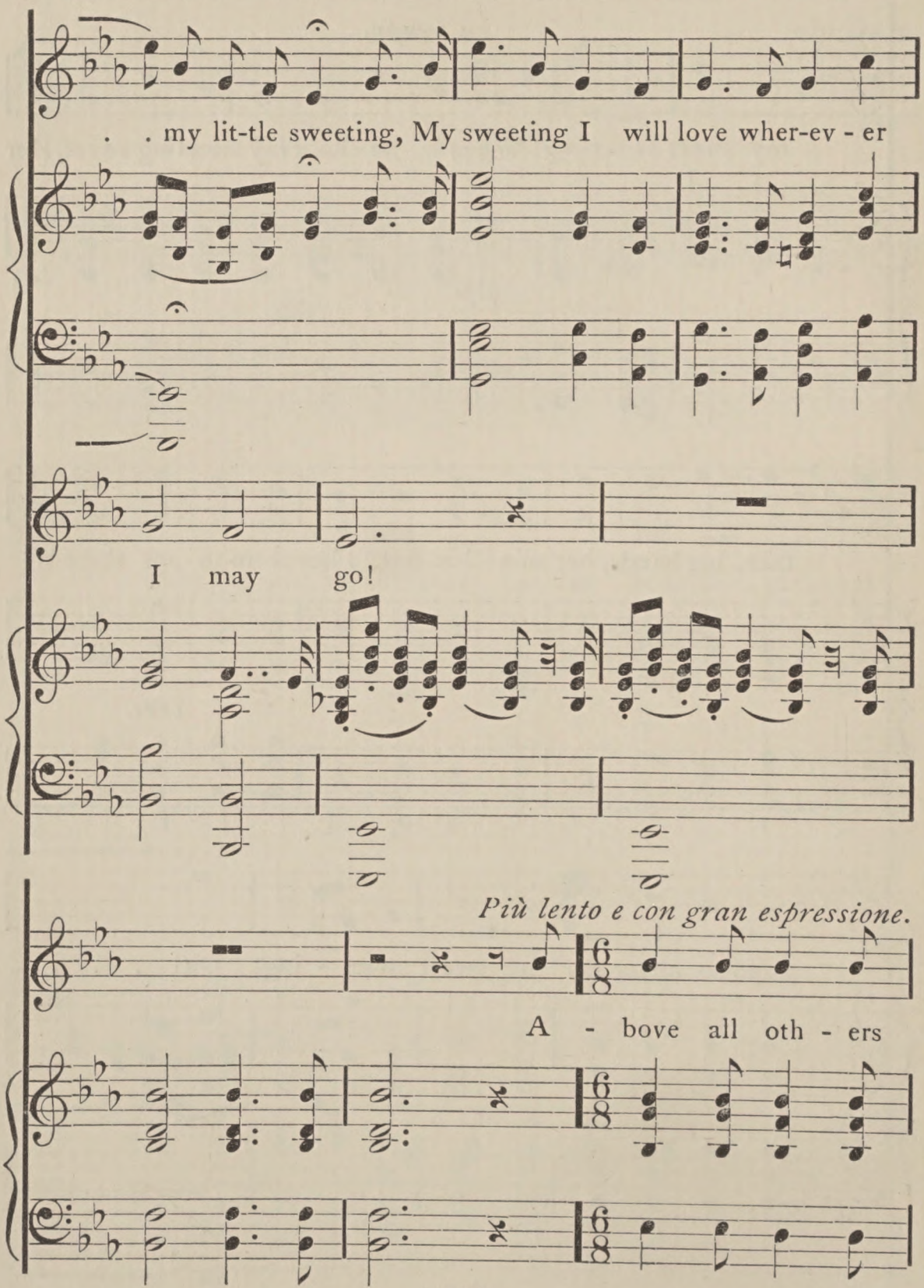
KING HENRY'S LOVE-SONG

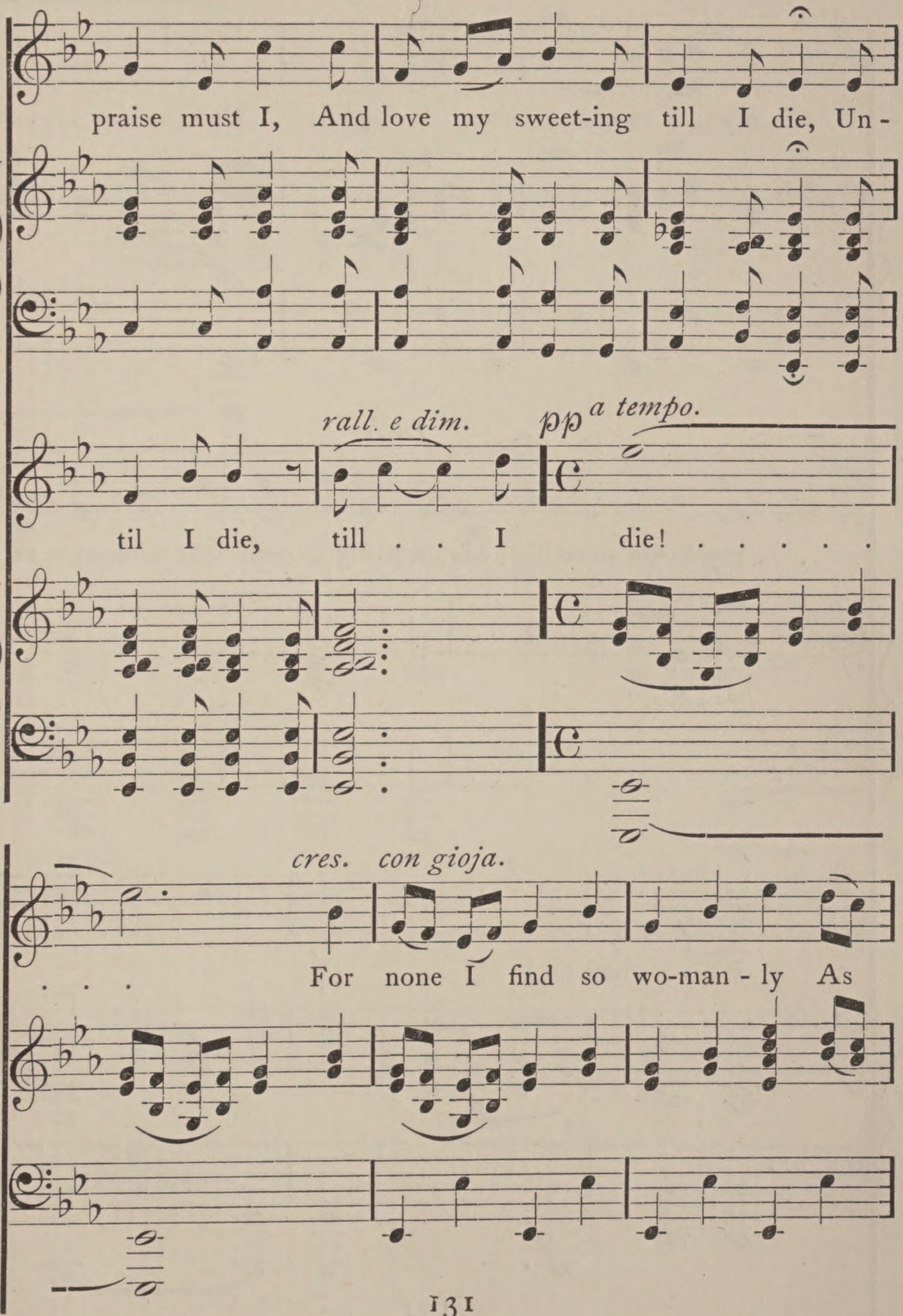


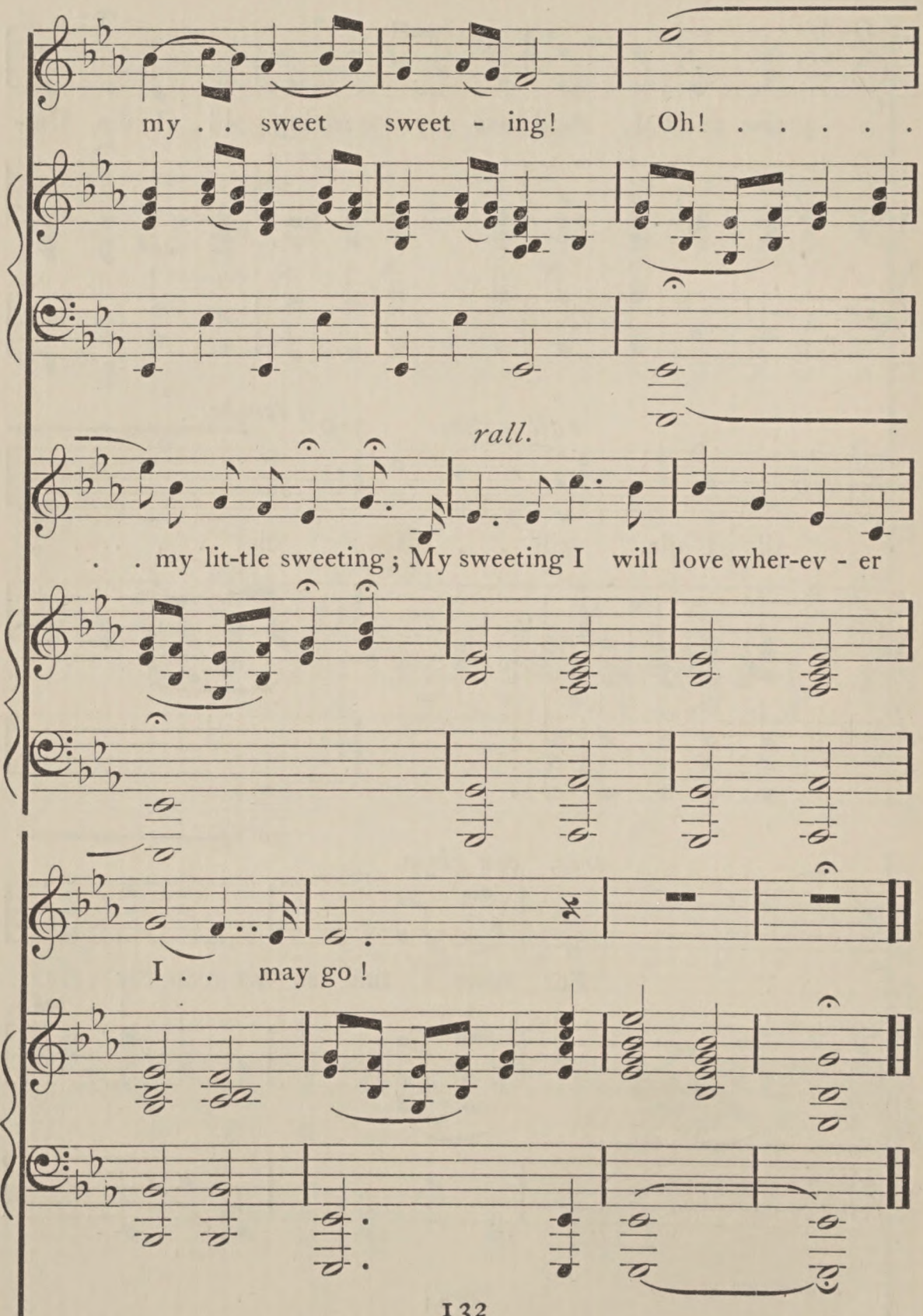
A CHRISTMAS GREETING




a tempo.
my sweet sweet-ing! When I be - hold my sweeting sweet, Her
pp
face, her hands, her min - ion feet, They seem to me there is
cres.
none so mete, As my sweet sweet - ing! Oh! . . . .


. . my lit-tle sweeting, My sweeting I will love wher-ev - er
I may go!
Più lento e con gran espressione.
A - bove all oth - ers


praise must I, And love my sweet-ing till I die, Un-
rall. e dim.
pp
a tempo.
til I die, till . . I die! . . . . .
cres. con gioja.
. . . For none I find so wo-man - ly As


my . . sweet sweet - ing! Oh! . . . . . .
rall.
. . my lit-tle sweeting ; My sweeting I will love wher-ev - er
I . . may go !

THE FIRE OF LIFE

THE FIRE OF LIFE

"Clearest evidence shows how our Earth was once a fluid haze of light, and how for countless æons afterwards her globe was instinct with fiery heat."

RICHARD PROCTOR.

ON the brooding breast of the empty Dark, ere ever the world was made,
When the Gods were asleep in a realm of rest, half-buried 'twixt Light and Shade;
A Spirit arose on the vasty air. — a glorious Spirit of fire, —
A winged Marvel, whose eyes were bright with the flame of a new desire;
Crown'd with a thousand stars he stood in a halo of burning beams,
And lifting his passionate voice he roused the Gods from their idle dreams.

Up they started, those massive Shapes, and with swift creative hands,
They parted the darkness, let loose the light, and fashioned the seas and lands;

Great forests sprang from the teeming soil,
with grasses and glory-flowers,
And minutes were made of jewel-points that
glittered into Hours;
Out-whirled the planets like silver ships in
the sapphire depths of Heaven
And the Sun and Moon were born like babes
from the marriage of Morn and Even.

Down through the skies fled the Spirit of
Flame, and piercing the new earth-clods,
Drew vapours thence which slowly up-grew
into forms that were like the Gods;
Vacant and empty of soul and sense, im-
potent creatures were they,
Till thrilled by the burning touch of Love,
they lived in the light of Day —
Lived, each one, for the breathing space of
threescore years and ten,
And swore they were more than the Gods
themselves, — these Shadows called women
and men!

Then weary grew the Spirit of Fire, and
rising on radiant wings,
He fled away from the whirling dance of his
brief created things —

Earth's black and sterile globe swung round
on an edge of circling cold,
And the Sun was drowned in a spherical sea
of moveless frozen gold —
The Gods departed and drowsed again by
Life's full-flowing river,
But the world they had made with a Breath
of Flame had passed from their thoughts
for ever!

THE DEVIL'S MOTOR

THE DEVIL'S MOTOR

A FANTASY

IN the dead midnight, at that supreme moment when the Hours that are past slip away from the grasp of the Hours yet to be, there came rushing between Earth and Heaven the sound of giant wheels, — the glare of great lights, — the stench and the muffled roar of a huge Car, tearing at full speed along the pale line dividing the Darkness from the Dawn. And he who stood within the Car, steering it straight onward, was clothed in black and crowned with fire; large bat-like wings flared out on either side of him in woven webs of smoke and flame, and his face was white as bleached bone. Like glowing embers his eyes burned in their cavernous sockets, shedding terrific glances through the star-strewn space, — and on his thin lips there was a frozen shadow of a smile more cruel than hate, — more deadly than despair.

"On!" he cried — "Still on! On with an endless rush and roar! Over the plains of the

world that is gone, — over the heights of the world to come — on, still on! Without pause, without pity, without love, without regret! Follow me, all ye Forces which are destined to work the ruin of Mankind, — follow! On, on, over all beauty, all tenderness, all truth I ride, — I, the Avenger, the Destroyer, the Torturer of Souls, the Arch-Enemy of God! The Kingdom of Hell grows wide and deep, — praise be to the Man who makes it! I count up my growing possessions in the ever-breeding spawn of human lust and avarice, — I breathe and live and rejoice in the fat poison-vapours of human Selfishness! The men of these latter days are my food and sustenance, — the women my choice morsels, my dainty delicates! Brute beasts and blind, they snatch at every lie I offer them; — rejecting Eternal Life, they choose Eternal Death, — verily they shall have their reward! Like a blight my Spirit shall encompass them, — and whosoever would scour the air and scorch the earth must run on the straight road of his desire with Me!"

The great Car flashed along with grinding, thunderous wheels, and as it flew, vast Phantom-forms followed it, like rolling clouds jagged with the lightning, — the fairness of the world grew

black; and sulphureous fumes quenched all sweetness from the air. The forests dropped like broken reeds, — the mountains crumbled into pits and quarries, the seas and rivers, the lakes and waterfalls dried up into black and muddy waters; and all the land was bereft of beauty. In the place of wholesome green fields and leafy woods, there rose up gigantic cities, built in on every side, and bristling with thousands upon thousands of chimneys belching forth sickening smoke into the overhanging gloom which hid the skies, and the cities were full of a deafening noise and crashing confusion as of ten million million hammers beating incessantly — beating away all peace, all solitude, all health, all rest. On, — on, and into these countless prisons of stone and mortar the Demon of the Car swept vast and ever-hurrying crowds of human beings, with the furious force of a mighty whirlwind sweeping dead leaves into the sea.

"No room to breathe — no time to think — no good to serve!" he cried — "Now shall you forget that God exists! Now shall you all have your own wild way, for Your way is My way! Now shall you resolve yourselves back to an embryo of worms and apes, and none

shall rescue you, no, not one! For the Seven Angels of the Judgment Day are sounding their trumpets of terror, and who shall silence the voices, or stay the thunderings and lightnings, or the great earthquake? Hail and fire! — and the trees, and the green grass burnt up and destroyed, — the sun and the moon, the day and the night smitten into one blackness! We will have no more virtues! — no more hopes of Heaven! Honour shall be as a rag on a fool's back, and Gold shall be the pulse of Life! Gold, gold, gold! Fight for it, steal it, pile it up, hoard it, count it, hug it, eat it, sleep with it, die with it! Lo, I give it to you in millions, packed down and pressed together in full and overflowing measure — I scatter it on you even as a destroying rain! — build with it, buy with it, gamble with it, sell your souls and bodies for it, — there are devils enough in hell to drive all your bargains! Sneer at truth, defeat justice, snatch virtue's mask to cover vice, drug conscience, feed and fatten yourselves with the lusts of animalism till the cancer of sin makes of you a putrefaction and an open sore in the sight of the sun! Come, learn from me such wisdom as shall compass your own destruction! Unto

you shall be unlocked the under-mysteries of Nature, and the secrets of the upper air, — you shall bend the lightning to your service, and the lightning shall slay! — you shall hollow out the ground, and delve a swift road through it for yourselves in fancied proud security, and the earth shall crumble in upon you as a grave, and the cities you have built shall crush you in their falling, — you shall seek to bind the winds and sail the skies, and Death shall wait for you in the clouds, and exult in your downfall. Come, tie your pigmy chariots to the sun, and so be drawn into its flaming vortex of perdition! All Creation shall rejoice to be cleansed from the pollution of your presence, for God hath sworn to give unto Me all who reject Him, and the Hour of the Gift has come!"

Still faster and more furiously flew the Car, — red meteors flashed in its course — and the Phantom shapes which followed its flight crowded together in an ever-thickening, ever, darkening multitude, while bright stars were shaken down from heaven like snowflakes whirling in a winter blast. And mingling with the grinding roar of its wheels came other sounds, — sounds of fierce laughter and loud cursing, —

yells and shrieks and groans of torture, — the screams of the suffering, the sobs of the dying, — and as the Fiend drove on with swiftly quickening speed, men and women and little children were trampled down one upon another and killed in their thousands, and the Car was splashed thick with human blood. And He who was clothed in black and crowned with fire, shouted exultingly as He dashed along over massacred heaps of dead nations and the broken remnants of thrones.

"Progress and Speed!" he yelled — "Rush on, world, with me! — rush on! There is but one end — hasten we to reach it! No halt by the way to gather the flowers of thought, — the fruits of feeling; — no pause for a lifting of the eyes to the wide firmament, where millions of spheres, more beautiful than this which men make wretched, sail on their courses like fair ships bound for God's golden harbours! No time to listen to the singing of the birds of hope, the ripple of the sweet waters of refreshment, the murmur of cool grasses waving in the fields of peace; — no time, no stop, — no lull for quiet breathing, — on! — forever on! Up and ride with me all ye who would reach the

goal! Come, ye fools of avarice! Come, ye blown and bursting windbags of world's conceit and vain pretension! Come, ye greedy maws of gluttony — ye human pottles of drink — ye wolves of vice! Come, ye shameless women of lusts and lies and vanities! Come, false hearts and treacherous tongues and painted faces! — come, dear demons all, and ride with me! Come, ye pretenders to holiness — ye thieves of virtue, who give "charity" to the poor with the right hand, and cheat your neighbour with the left! — come, ye gamblers with a Nation's honour, stake your last throw! Come, all ye morphia-fed vampires and slaves to poison! — grasp at my wheels and cling! On — on — over the fragments of mighty Empires, — over the hearts of kings and queens, — over the lives of the brave, the good, and the wise! — let us trample them all down and crush them into dust and ashes! What shall we do with wisdom, we who have done with God? What with purity? — what with courage? Naught are these but reproach and bitterness — mere obstacles in the broad way which leadeth to destruction; — ride them down! On — on! to the destined end! — on with rush and hurry

and panting eagerness to reach the only goal — the last of winning-posts — the close of Certainties, — the GRAVE!"

Like a flashing blur of fiery wheels the Car now spun along in the blackness of the night, and the drifting Phantoms round about it were as great grey sails swelling with the angry blast, and sweeping it onward through the dark.

"Pray no more — hope no more — love no more!" cried the Fiend. "Be as the shifting sands, or as the trembling quicksilver — inconstant, capricious — ever in motion, never at rest! Change — change and revolt! All ye who weary of old things, behold I give you new! Bodies shall be pampered and souls killed for your pleasure — vices shall be called foulest 'sensations,' — each merely to be tried, excused, and condemned in turn, — and virtues shall have no more place at all in the scale of feeling! The music of life shall clash into wild discord — the love of home shall be a lost glory, — tenderness for the young and reverence for the old shall be the faded sentiments of the past, only fit for a mummer's jest! Change — Change and Sensation! Roll out your columns of vaporous notoriety, ye printing-presses of the

world! — spread wide the fame of the Anarchist and the Courtesan, — mock and revile the spirits of the wise and true, — noise abroad the name of the Murderer, and treat the Poet with derision — give flattery to the rich, and scorn to the humble, — teach nothing but the art of lying, — add venom to the tongue of scandal, — dig up the graves of the great, and kill the reputations of the brave and pure! Help nothing on that is noble — nothing that is honest, — nothing that is of God, or for God, — print every lie, grudge every truth, and let your trumpet-note be that of blatant Atheism and Devilry to the end! Set trade against trade, — community against community, — nation against nation — till with your windy bombast and senseless twaddle you fill your witches' cauldron of mischief and contention to the full! Up and ride with me, ye Plotters against Peace! — ye whose hands are against every man! — there is no time to be lost — up and away with a rush and a roar! — for the Great Star has fallen from heaven to earth, and to Him is given the key of the bottomless pit! The pit is open — the gate stands wide — up, and speed on with Me!"

Like lightning now the great Car tore through space — its flaring lamps flashing, its wheels grinding with the sullen noise of a bursting volcano, — and amidst cries and shrieks indescribable, it leaped, as it were, from peak to peak of toppling clouds that towered above and around it like mighty mountains. And presently it seemed as if a thin, pale line of purple fire glimmered afar off, and by this light was seen a monstrous ridge of dense blackness jutting sharply over some vast incalculable depth of horror. On — still on — the Car rushed; and He of the sable robes and flaming crown urged apace its reckless speed with wild shouts of wilder laughter.

"All the world in such haste to die!" he cried. "All the world gone mad with the craze of movement! Up in the air, down on the earth — all turned to whirling, flying, tossing atoms of dust in a storm, and lo, the End! Be patient now, for ye shall never wander again — be silent now, for prayer and cursing, laughter and tears are done — let the hoarded gold drop from your grasp — it can purchase nothing yonder! Was it worth while, think you, — this rush headlong, to be cast into silence?

Was it worth while to leave the sunshine for this dark? — beauty for this decay? — sweet sounds of love and tenderness for this still glow of the eternal flame which is not quenched — this gnawing of the eternal worm whose appetite is never satisfied? Lo, ye have burnt up a world to light Hell with its flame! — but the world shall blossom again like a flower springing from the dust, and ye whose soulless lives have been a curse and an outrage on its fairness, shall pace its pleasant paths no more! Rejoice, O earth! — rejoice, O sea! — to be freed of the burden of mankind! Rejoice, O birds, that the hand of the spoiler shall no longer wound or slay! — rejoice, O trees, that the axe of the destroyer shall no more cast ye down! — rejoice, O all ye living creatures of the field and forest, that Treachery no longer stalks the world in man's disguise! Take back thy planet, O great God, cleansed of a pigmy race! Create a new Humanity! — for this is past!"

On — on, — along the black ridge jutting darkly over silent Immensity, with a whirl of fire and roar of thunder the Car flew, — and then — as if for one brief breathing part of a second it paused! Like a vast Shadow between

earth and heaven the Demon stood — his bony hand on the steering-wheel — and every point in his flaming crown scintillating with the sparkle of a million stars. Round about him soared and stooped countless terrific Phantom-shapes — some like wrecked ships — some like torn flags of honour — some like mounted warriors — some like throned kings — some like fair women veiled in a mist of tears, — and beneath his bat-like pinions, outstretched to north and south, there glimmered a pale crowd of white faces, upturned wild eyes and imploring hands — all crushed together in a writhing mass of agony! But no sound came from those dumb mouths agape with terror, — all were silent as Death itself, and only the thunderous roar of the Car echoed through space, as, after that infinitely brief pause, it dashed furiously onward and down! — down, — down sheer over the edge of that mystic precipice into the fathomless abyss of the Unseen and Unknown!

A thousand lightnings leaped after it — a thousand crashing echoes vibrated through the Universe with its fall, — one frightful human cry shuddered up to Heaven — and then — silence! Gradually, gently, and by faint de-

grees, a purpling fire crimsoned the wavering rise of dawn — a cool wind parted the air into sweet breadths of fragrance — and in the centre of the awful stillness a scarlet sun rose slowly in a clear sky, fixing the red seal of God on the closed history of a World!

GOD AND SATAN

GOD AND SATAN

GOD said — "I will create
A world in the air!"
Satan heard and answered —
"I too will be there!"

God said — "I will make of Man
A creature supreme!" —
Satan answered — "I will destroy
Thy splendid Dream!"

God said — "I will ordain
That Thou shalt no longer be!"
Satan answered — "Thou canst not, Lord,
For I am a part of Thee!"

"IMAGINARY" LOVE

"IMAGINARY" LOVE

"My love
Is as the very centre of the earth
Drawing all things to it."

Troilus and Cressida.

THERE is perhaps no emotion more elevating or more deceptive than that sudden uplifting of the heart and yearning of the senses which may be called "imaginary" Love. It resembles the stirring of the sap in the roots of flowers, thrilling the very ground with hints and promises of spring,—it is the unspeakable outcoming of human emotion and sympathy too great to be contained within itself,—the tremulous desire,—half vague and wholly innocent,—of the human soul for its mate. The lower grades of passion have not as yet ruffled the quivering white wings of this divinely sweet emotion, and the being who is happy enough to experience it in all its intensity, is, for the time, the most enviable on earth. Youth or

maiden, whichever it be, the world is a fairyland for this chosen dreamer. Nothing appears base or mean,—God's smile is reflected in every ray of sunshine, and Nature offers no prospect that is not pleasing. It is the season of glamour and grammarye,—a look over the distant hills is sufficient to engage the mind of the dreaming girl with brilliant fancies of gallant knights riding from far-off countries, with their lady's colours pinned to their breasts "to do or die" for the sake of love and glory,—and the young boy, half in love with a pretty face he has seen on his way home from school or college, begins to think with all the poets, of eyes blue as skies, of loves and doves, and hearts and darts, in happy unconsciousness that his thoughts are not in the least original. Yet with all its ethereal beauty and gossamer-sense of pleasure, this "imaginary" love is often the most pathetic experience we have or ever shall have in life. It is answerable for numberless griefs,—for bitter disillusions,—occasionally, too, for broken hearts. It glitters before us, a brilliant chimera, during our very young days,—and on our entrance into society it vanishes, leaving us to pursue it through many phases of existence, and always in vain. The

poet is perhaps the happiest of all who join in this persistent chase after the impossible, — for he frequently continues to imagine "imaginary" love with ecstasy and fervour to the very end of his days. Next in order comes the musician, who in the composition of a melancholy nocturne or tender ballad, or in the still greater work of a romantic opera, imagines "imaginary" love in strains of perfect sound, which waken in the hearts of his hearers all the old feverish longings, all the dear youthful dreams, all the delicious romances which accompanied the lovely white-winged Sentiment in days past and dead for ever. Strange to say, it often happens that the musician, while thus appeasing his own insatiable thirst for "imaginary" love, is frequently aware that he is arousing it in others; and, could he probe to the very fibres of his thinking soul, he would confess to a certain keen satisfaction in the fact of his being able to revivify the old restless yearning of a pain which is sweeter to the lonely soul than pleasure.

Now this expression of the "lonely soul" is used advisedly, because, in sad truth, every human soul is lonely. Lonely at birth, — still more lonely at death. During its progress

through life it gathers around it what it can in the way of crumbs of love, grains of affection, taking them tenderly and with tears of gratefulness. But it is always conscious of solitude, — an awful yet Divine solitude, over which the Infinite broods, watchful yet silent. Why it is brought into conscious being, to live within a material frame and there perform certain duties and labours, and from thence depart again, it cannot tell. All is a mystery, — a strange Necessity, in which it cannot truly recognize its part or place. Yet it is, — and one of the strongest proofs of its separate identity from the body is this "imaginary" love for which it yearns, and which it never obtains. "Imaginary" love is not earthly, — neither is it heavenly, — it is something between both, a vague and inchoate feeling, which, though incapable of being reduced to any sort of reason or logic, is the foundation of perhaps all the greatest art, music, and poetry in the world. If we had to do merely with men as they are and women as they are, Art would perish utterly from the face of the earth. It is because we make for ourselves "ideal" men, "ideal" women, and endow these fair creations with the sentiment of "imaginary"

love, that we still are able to communicate with the gods. Not yet have we lowered ourselves to the level of the beasts, — nor shall we do so, though things sometimes seem tending that way. Realism and Atheism have darkened the world, as they darken it now, long before the present time, and as defacements on the grandeur of the Universe they have not been permitted to remain. Nor will they be permitted now, — the reaction will, and must inevitably set in. The repulsive materialism of Zola, and others of his school, — the loose theories of the "smart" set, and the moral degradation of those who have no greater God than self, — these things are the merest ephemera, destined to leave no more mark on human history than the trail of a slug on one leaf of an oak. The ideal must always be triumphant, — the soul can only hope to make way by climbing towards it. Thus it is with "imaginary" or ideal Love, — it must hold fast to its ideal, or be content to perish on the plane of sensual passion, which exhausts itself rapidly, and once dead is dead forever and aye.

With all its folly, sweetness, piteousness, and pathos, "imaginary" love is the keynote of

Art, — its fool-musings take shape in exquisite verse, in tales of romance and adventure, in pictures that bring the nations together to stand and marvel, in music that makes the strong man weep. It is the most supersensual of all delicate sensations, — as fine as a hair, as easily destroyed as the gnat's wing; — a rough touch will wound it, — a coarse word will kill it, — the sneer of the Realist shuts it in a coffin of lead and sinks it fathoms deep in the waters of despair. Strange and cruel as the fact may seem, Marriage appears to put an end to it altogether.

"Think you if Laura had been Petrarch's wife
He would have written sonnets to her all his life?"

inquires Lord Byron. He certainly would not. The "imaginary" love of Petrarch was the source of his poetic inspiration; if he had ever dragged it down to the level of the commonplace Actual, he would have killed his Muse. In a similar way the love of Dante for Beatrice was of the "imaginary" quality. Those who read the "Vita Nuova" will scarcely fail to see how the great poet hugs his love-fancies and feeds himself with delicious extravagances in the way of idealized and sublimated soul-

passion. He dissects every fine hair of a stray emotion, and writes a sonnet on every passing heart-beat. Dante's wife never became so transfigured in her husband's love. Why? Alas, who can say! No reason can be given save that perchance "familiarity breeds contempt," and that the unattainable seems always more beautiful than the attained. The delight of possession would appear to be as brief as the flowering of a rose. Lovers are in haste to wed, — but when the knot is once irrevocably tied, in nine cases out of ten they wish it could be untied again. They no longer imagine "imaginary" love. The glamour is gone. Illusions are all over. The woman is no longer the removed, the fair, the chaste, the unreachable, — the man ceases to be the proud, the strong, — the hero endowed with the attributes of the gods. "Imaginary" love then resolves itself into one of two things, — a firm, every-day close and tender *friendship*, or else a sick disappointment often ending in utter disgust. But the divine emotion of "imaginary" love has fled, — the Soul is no longer enamoured of its Ideal — and the delicate psychic passion which inspires the poet, the painter, the musician, turns

at once to fresh objects of admiration and pursuit. For it is never exhausted, — unlike any purely earthly sense, it knows no satiety. Deceived in one direction, it flies in another. Dissatisfied with worldly things, it extends its longing heavenwards, — there at least it shall find what it seeks, — not now, but hereafter! Age does not blunt this fine emotion, for, as may often be remarked with some beautiful souls in the decline of bodily life, the resigning of earthly enjoyments gives them no pain, — and the sweet placidity of expectation, rather than the dull apathy of regret, is their chief characteristic. "Imaginary" love still beckons them on; — what has not been found Here will be found There!

Happy, and always to be envied, are those who treasure this aerial sentiment of the spiritual brain! It is the dearest possession of every true artist. In every thought, in every creative work or plan, "imaginary" love goes before, pointing out wonders unseen by less enlightened eyes, — hiding things unsightly, disclosing things lovely, and making the world fair to the mind in all seasons, whether of storm or calm. Intensifying every enjoyment, adding a double

thrill to the notes of a sweet song, lending an extra glow to the sunshine, an added radiance to the witchery of the moonlight, a more varied and exquisite colouring to the trees and flowers, a charm to every book, a delight to every new scene, "imaginary" love, a very sprite of enchantment, helps us to believe persistently in good, when those who love not at all, neither in reality nor in idealization, are drowning in the black waters of suicidal despair.

So it is well for us — those who can — to imagine "imaginary" love. We shall never grasp the Dream in this world — nevertheless let us fly after it as though it were a Reality! Its path is one of sweetness more than pain, — its ways are devious, yet even in sadness still entrancing. Better than rank, better than wealth is this talisman, which with a touch brings us into close communication with the Higher worlds. Let us "imagine" our friends are true; let us "imagine" we are loved for our own sakes alone, — let us "imagine," as we welcome our acquaintances into our homes, that their smiles and greetings are sincere — let us imagine "imaginary" love as the poets do, — a passion tender, strong, and changeless — and

pursue it always, even if the objects, which for a moment its passing wings have brushed, crumble into dust beneath that touch of fire! So shall our lives retain the charm of constant Youth and Hope,—so shall the world seem always beautiful to us,—so shall the Unimaginable glory of the future Real-in-Love shine nearer every day in our faithful, fond pursuit of its flying Shadow!

A FORGIVENESS

A FORGIVENESS

"That curse shall be Forgiveness!"
BYRON'S *Childe Harold*

FORGIVE? Yes, — but I
cannot forget,
For the deathless Soul is
strong,
And God Himself can never
efface
Its memory of a Wrong;
And though you are dead and laid in your grave
And the evil you wrought is done,
Though your lips are cold in the covering
mould,
Yet your dastard Lie lives on!

Forgive? Yes, — but I cannot forget
The merciless, murderous thrust
Of your treacherous hand with its backward
blow
When you killed my whole life's trust;
Craving my pity, you broke my heart
And slandered my name and fame, —
By the Christian creed, I forgive you, coward!
Let the pardon be your shame!

Forgive? Yes, — as the Christ forgave
When the Judas Kiss was given,
And Hell suck'd down the traitor's soul
While his curse was pronounc'd in Heaven!
Nothing so low, and nothing so base
As a stab in the back of a friend,
And those who saw you handle the knife
Scarce wonder'd at your end!

Forgive? Yes, — my forgiveness shall burn
On your grave in "coals of fire," —
It shall kindle into a flame and leap
To the height of my life's desire,
It shall reach straight up to the gates of God,
And there like a Sword shall stay,
And, lest you come sneaking out of Hell
It shall bar your heavenward way!

It shall warn you off with the lightning flash
Of an honest faith betray'd —
It shall shut you out from the garden of God,
And hold you back afraid, —
Like a torch of terror adown your dark
Its endless flare shall shine,
And spread like a widening gulf of fire
Between your spirit and mine.

A FORGIVENESS

Forgive? Yes — but I shall not forget!
I shall keep your name in my prayers,
That God may remember as well as I
The infamous taint it bears!
I forgive — I forgive! But I shall not
forget; —
And as long as the great worlds roll,
My forgiveness shall be as the seal of doom
Fixed down upon your soul!

"CARE-TAKERS"

"CARE-TAKERS"

A WARNING TO HOUSE-OWNERS

THE word "care-taker" conveys, or would seem to convey, an impression that is both Christian and consolatory. To "take care" of things or persons is eminently proper and virtuous, — to accept care, another way of "taking" it, — namely, to willingly undergo a certain amount of trouble and vexation in order to spare others, is really almost sublime. But in these degenerate days of ours it does not always do to give literal significations to words in common use. They often, with strange and unaccountable capriciousness, mean the exact reverse of what they seem. "Care-taker" is a notable example of this fact, — for in the modern acceptance of the term it really signifies an individual who, so far as material and mundane needs go, is totally free from care, and who, moreover, has no intention of "taking care" of anything or anybody. "Care-taker" means a person, sometimes masculine, but more often feminine, who lives rent-

free and pays no taxes, — who has a small stock of generally useful second-hand furniture which is moved at his or her command from house to house wherever best convenience calls, and who is paid for eating, drinking, sleeping, and doing nothing in "desirable mansions" whose owners are out of town, or who, for some dark reason connected with the funds, are wishful "To Let Immediately." Care-takers are not at all like the rest of humanity; they are a race apart, with peculiar manners and customs of their own. Many of them have a fondness for the "cup that cheers;" many more exhibit a decided partiality for the glass which "inebriates." Some of them would even appear to use whisky as a general and agreeable perfume, to judge from the odours which are diffused from their hair and clothes, when they open front doors to belated inquirers after absent friends, or any seekers after unfurnished houses. Whosoever is in the latter category of sufferers and martyrs deserves and shall have our sincerest sympathy. We know what he is going through! We know what the "agents" will do to him! He will be told that there is a "Charming Residence" on the "delightful elevation" of Campden Hill, for

instance, and he will find out that it is nothing but a small and paltry "semi-detached" in the depressing depths of the Holland Villas Road, with the bath-tap broken and the water coming through. He will wander hopefully into Mayfair, decoyed by the prospect of living "off Park Lane" in a "bijou" establishment —

Stop! I really must break off here to deliver a solemn warning against this word "bijou." Beware of it! — all good patient folk who go house-hunting, beware of it! Fly from that fatal expression as you would from the plague! "Bijou" has a delightful meaning in ordinary French parlance; it signifies a "jewel" and, when used as a term of endearment, a "darling." Charming! — oh, yes! — quite soothing to the mind is this pretty word in *French.* But in plain, downright, house-agenty English it means "den," — "hole," — or "rather dark cellarage." It has nothing to do with jewels or darlings. It implies a want of room and a bad smell. It does indeed. It is like the frequently advertised "Artistic Residence," — which means dark corners and small windows, — namely, very little air and no light. Once understand these things, and you will not be twice deceived.

And this brings me round to the subject I started with — "care-takers," because it was at a "bijou" place I came into collision with the first example of that species. The "bijou" in question was near the Park; a small house squeezed in between two monster ones. The street-door looked like a narrow slit in the wall, and the windows were black with soot that had accumulated surely for several years, — months could hardly have done it. I rang the cracked bell, and waited some ten minutes, — finally a shuffling step was heard inside (care-takers always walk with a shuffle like a certain *genus* of baboon), and a female appeared, hastily pulling her dress over a somewhat *décolletée* bosom. Her hair was wildly negligent, — her eye bloodshot and severe, — one tooth projected over her underlip, — the rest of the dental arrangement was missing. She surveyed me with a malign and discouraging aspect, apparently scorning to open the conversation. So I began:

"This house is to let, I believe? Can I see it?"

"Where's yer order?" demanded the lady.

I produced it.

She sniffed at the paper suspiciously, and then

preceded me into a sort of square pantry called by courtesy a "hall," and flung wide open two doors, one of the dining-room, the other of the drawing-room, out of which apartments rushed a fine aroma like that which arises from the canals of Venice on a very hot day.

"Are these all the reception rooms?" I inquired.

"Hall?" she echoed, staring at me — "hall? Yes, hall!"

I said, "Thanks! I will not trouble you further."

But she made no movement, either to let me pass or to show me out.

"I've bin 'ere," she stated, — "these two years, and my darter's baby was born in the kitching."

"Indeed!" I murmured, politely endeavouring to edge my way to the door. But she stuck her stout arms akimbo and proceeded:

"They wants a premium for this place, and I sez to them, sez I, 'You 'll never get it.' I sez that. No more they won't. There 's a view of the Park from the back."

This last observation was thrown in, as it were, casually.

"I am aware of that," I said — "But I am not particular about the Park. Good-morning!"

"Well, that 's what I sez," she went on morosely — "I sez 'there 's those that does n't care for the Park and there 's those that does. But a premium you 'll not get.' Why, when my darter's baby was born in that kitching, we was afraid he would be eat up by the rats, there 's such a many of them. *And* beetles. There 's a many of them too. Lord bless yer, half them premiums goes into the hagents' pockets! The old lady as was here last drunk herself to death — and there won't be a penny spent on repairs!"

By this time I had found out how to open the street-door for myself, — and I made my exit thankfully, the Venetian-canal odour being somewhat overpowering. *En passant* I may mention that for this house, dirty, undecorated, and in the worst possible repair, a rent was asked of £250 per annum, and Four Thousand Pounds premium!

My next experience in the way of "caretakers" was of an excitable lady who was too far gone in her cups to be aware of her duties. She was placed in charge of a rather handsome house, — handsome as far as its exterior went.

Of the interior I am unable to speak, as the convival "care-taker" had not the vaguest idea of admitting me. She opened the door about the width of half a yard, and peered at me with her rolling, restless eyes, her blotched and inflamed face producing quite a heating effect on the immediate atmosphere.

"It's a good 'ouse," — she observed, lurching to and fro like a landsman at sea in a heavy storm — "A good 'ouse! Yes, *I* say it — a good 'ouse, — and we wants to let it — hic — hic! — to good tenants! Yaah — yaah!"

This wild ejaculation was addressed to a poor thin cat who came feebly trying to make its way in at the door.

"Git out, you beast! Nasty, dirty brute! Gives me more trouble than the whitewashers, it do! It's a good house!" and here she nearly fell forward — "for good tenants, — I 've lived here myself for a twelvemonth!"

With that she banged the door full in my face, and I straightway fled, wondering whether the owner of the "good 'ouse" had any notion as to the way in which his property was "taken care" of. I suppose not, — for day after day I see it still "To Let," and I fancy it will not

easily find a tenant so long as its present "caretaker" finds her lodgment comfortable.

One morning I came upon an odd "caretaker" in a pretty house near Kensington Gardens. It was a "he" this time, — a placid, cunning, bent little old man with the air of the respectable retired butler about him. He was of a curious disposition, — garrulous, yet reticent; — he would begin to talk about the former owner of the house, and then would pull himself up short as though afraid of betraying confidence. The rooms were very handsomely decorated, — but it seemed that the owner had given it up abruptly after only three years' tenancy.

"It looked beautiful," said the grey-haired cicerone with a smothered sigh — "when it was all furnished. There was the Venus of Mydeses (Medicis) in the boudoir, and there was statues and busts all about, and oak-framed pictures in the dining-room, — yes! it was really quite *bee*-autiful when he had it all done up — "

Here he broke off and dusted the banisters.

"Why did he leave it after spending so much money upon it?" I asked.

The respectable old gentleman looked at me shrewdly.

"Ah!" he responded with a curious expression in his filmy eyes — "Why indeed!"

This was baffling, and he seemed to think it so, for by way of relenting, he confided to me the information (a well-worn ruse) that there had already been several people after the house, and that I had better see about it at once if I wished to secure it. I took the information very unconcernedly.

"Oh, I am not at all keen about it," I said — "I have seen a house in Gladys Gardens I like rather better."

He started as if I had given him a shock.

"Gladys Gardens!" he exclaimed — "Lord love you! Why, Gladys Gardens is going down every year! It's gone down since my time — I used to live there — I was there when the murder was committed!"

This was rather an unpleasant light to throw on Gladys Gardens, and its desirability seemed at once on the wane.

"What murder?" I asked.

"Oh, well, it was some time ago," he said, now appearing benevolently anxious not to cause me unnecessary alarm — "But it was a shocking murder! — and Gladys Gardens has gone down ever since. You'd much better live here than there!"

With which parting recommendation he bowed me out urbanely, having done his utmost best, at all risks, for his employer's advantage.

Of the number of babies born in "desirable mansions" and "Noble Residences" it would be hopeless to attempt any calculation. The comfortable quarters enjoyed by "care-takers," coupled with good pay, make them, as a rule, unwilling to move when once installed, and reluctant to praise the qualities of the house they inhabit, lest they should be forced to vacate for an actual paying tenant. So that if they are very cosy, and have made a family home and birthplace of some warm and roomy basement in De Vere Gardens or Kensington Gate or other fashionable neighbourhoods, and you want to take the house that serves them so well as lodging, you may be sure you will hear something doubtful about the drainage, the water, or the waste-pipes, or the "closeness" or the "darkness," — something to scare you off, in fact, and enable them to stay where they are in peace, and leave you out in the cold. This plan of action is so obviously natural, that it is very strange lessees of houses do not perceive it. Many houses in London have been occu-

pied by "care-takers" for three or four years, never seeming to have any chance of letting — and considering what a loss of money this means to the actual owners, surely the question of "care-taking" deserves some consideration. Of course, the fabulous rents asked for mere boxes and barns of accommodation in good centres is one great reason for the non-letting of houses, as also the prevailing preference for "flats," — but the "care-takers" have their share in the obstruction, and so have the house-agents. So, also, has the system of demanding "premiums" — a system which is positively nefarious. Recently a friend of mine was asked two thousand guineas premium for a house whose rental was £180 per annum. He was a big, broad-shouldered American, and took matters coolly.

"What do you want a premium for?" he demanded.

"For the improvements — the position, — the last owner spent a great deal on the place."

"He did, did he? Well, where's he gone to now?"

"He has bought a place in the country."

"Oh! Well, you just ask him if he was thinking about me when he fixed up those 'im-

provements'? If he was, I 'll give him a hundred dollars! But if he was planning out all those things for himself and his own comfort, and now wants *me* to pay for what *he* got the newest and best of, he's just as mean a cuss as ever hung between this world and the next!"

This was a sort of logic not accepted by house-agents, — and the consequence of his refusal to pay the premium demanded lost him the "desirable residence" he had been inclined to take. But it is still unlet, and seems likely to remain so. It may here be remarked that house-agents themselves generally *suggest* the asking of premiums. And why? Because they get their own percentage out of it. In the business of house-letting, as in other trades and professions, things would go on much better without the "middle-man." If owners of houses could and would come into direct communication with intending tenants, they would find matters much more satisfactory in every respect, but no doubt it will take some time, and a good deal of bitter experience as well, to persuade them of the fact. And meantime, excellent houses remain empty for years, given over to dirt and neglect and "care-takers" who do not pay for the roof that

shelters them, and who take no sort of interest in their employer's loss or gain.

One of the strangest "care-takers" I ever came across was a small old boy with a wizened pale face, — and spectacles. Out of sheer curiosity I asked him how old he was — he said fourteen, and I was bound to believe him. But he looked more like seventy, and badly worn at that. He had the most precocious knowledge of domestic arrangements, — he knew all about gas-stoves and "kitcheners," — and, what was rather remarkable, he had an æsthetic taste in colours. He showed me over a newly-decorated house, not far off Cadogan Square, and observed that it would probably have to be re-done for "any person of taste who was still young enough to care!"

"The colouring in the drawing-room," said the small old boy, with an inimitable air of fastidious repugnance, "is quite trying to the nerves."

I looked in, and found it really was so — garish and gaudy to an extreme — and I asked him playfully how he managed to stand it.

"I am accustomed to it," said the small old boy wearily, taking off his spectacles, wiping them, and putting them on again — "that is, in

a way, you know. One never does get out-and-out hardened to it. This —" and he threw open a door — "is the dining-room. It should have had an oak dado!"

"Of course!" I said, delighted with the small old boy's feeling for art. He seemed cheered by my encouragement and proceeded:

"An oak dado and overmantel to match. The tint of the ceiling would then have to be modified. As it is at present no person of taste would stand it — not as a permanency."

"How long have you been here?" I inquired.

"I shall have occupied this position some three months to-morrow," said the small old boy with a certain stateliness of manner — "But I think of resigning it shortly to my mother. I 'm rather tired of it myself, though it has served me well for reading purposes."

"For reading purposes!" I looked at him wonderingly, — he was so meagre and wan and worn and ancient of aspect.

"You see," he went on placidly — "you want quiet when you are studying for anything. And it 's very quiet here. As they say in *Hamlet*, 'not a mouse stirring.'"

"Ah! you read Shakespeare then?"

"I learn the various parts in the principal plays," he replied with dignity — "I am going to be an actor."

"Indeed!" I did my best not to laugh, — the small old boy was so earnest and solemn.

"I have calculated," he said, "that in from eight to ten years Henry Irving will be, as they say, on his last legs. I shall be twenty-four, and shall have played any small parts I can get in the provinces till then. I shall save all the money I can, and live as the Greek philosophers lived, on simple food, — and when I am about thirty-two I shall take the Lyceum or Her Majesty's. That is my plan."

"A very ambitious one!" I observed — "Plans are not always realized, you know!"

The small old boy smiled a superior smile.

"Not unless one is *determined* to realize them," he said with singular emphasis — "Then things arrange themselves somehow. I am quite certain of my game!"

And he escorted me to the door.

"You think you'll take this house?" he asked.

"N-n-no! I fancy not."

"You are right!" said the small old boy ap-

provingly — " It 's only a patched-up concern — just made to look new for the present. In six months all the gloss will be off, and it will appear as just what it is — a badly-built barrack. Good-morning ! "

" Good-morning ! "

The door closed. I waited a minute, then peered curiously in through the window, and dimly perceived the small old boy seated in solitary state on a kitchen chair in the bleak empty dining-room, patiently studying a book that rested on his knee. I moved away reluctantly at last and with a veritable sensation of awe, feeling that, whatever annoyances I had been subjected to in the way of " care-takers," I had been repaid at last by my interview with this particular example of the species ! For if ambition, perseverance, study, self-reliance and determination count for anything in this world — (and they do go a long way in the furtherance of one's desires) then I had seen a future " star " of the histrionic firmament. We all know how fond actors are of telling us in after-dinner speeches how they arrived in London ready to take the world by storm with only sixpence in their pockets, — in fact this dramatic sixpence

has become quite proverbial, and many a deep-mouthed ranter has alluded to the possession of that humble coin as the grand foundation of all his after career.

"Ladies and gentlemen," — he will remark in his mellow-throated way — "When I first started in life with only sixpence in my pocket —" and so on. This is the generally accepted and acceptable opening of a truly "telling" mummer's speech, after a watch or a piece of plate has been presented to him by his admirers.

Now, if I should live another ten years, and at the end of that time, a celebrated actor dear to the fashionable public should make his after-dinner observations thus: "Ladies and gentlemen, — When I first started in life as a 'care-taker' —" I shall know it is the small old boy, and that I, by happy chance, was privileged to behold in that menial, though rent-and-tax-free position, the successor to the fame of Henry Irving!

JOE'S ORCHID

JOE'S ORCHID

It took a little time to grow,
Joe!
The sprouting of its leaves was slow,
We know;
But now its shining buds unfold,
Bright as the glittering Transvaal gold;—
'T is worthy of a special "show,"
Joe!

'T was pestered by an insect foe,
Joe!
The horrid creature would n't go
Below;—
The native, gnawing, noxious Boer
Clung to its very root and core,
And tried your little temper so!
Joe!

But now admiring thanks we owe
Joe!
To you who forced the flower to blow,
Although

A CHRISTMAS GREETING

The trail of human blood and pain
Has left upon its leaves a stain; —
But that you cannot help, we know,
Joe!

Gorgeous the golden blossoms glow,
Joe!
Can England such a plant forego?
Why, no!
Your skill in Orchid cultivation
Has given us a conquered nation; —
But, — make you Premier? Oh, go slow,
Joe!

SAVAGE LONDON

SAVAGE LONDON

THERE are more than one hundred and eighty religious Sects in England; — and all of them have Representatives in London. There are innumerable Charity Organization Societies, — Missions without end, — Relief Funds with Centre Offices and Branch Offices in London. There is much preaching, much lecturing, much writing; — yet, when all is said, done, and written, the grim result is the same, — namely that the squalor, filth, vice, ignorance, recklessness, wretchedness, and brutality of the great Majority of the Poor in our wealthy English metropolis is a crying scandal, and "a rank offence that smells to heaven." The religious sects meet often and discuss much, — beginning their discussions generally with a bombastical flow of oratory, and ending in a violent wrangle over some knotty point of doctrine, while the miserable creatures who cry to them for relief, cry in vain to ears that are deafened by selfishness and plugged up with conceit. A great deal too

much of the money subscribed to charitable Societies goes to pay secretaries and underlings, and many and many a starving wretch has been turned ruthlessly away unaided from the doors of a stately building, flagrantly announcing itself as a "Refuge for the Destitute." Yet nowhere are there such large sums subscribed to Foreign Missions as in London; — the Kaffir, the Zulu, the "Heathen Chinee," — all these may appeal to London and be sure of a favourable answer. Dukes and Earls who love to see their names blazoned on lists of charitable donations would appear, from what is said about them in print, to take a deep interest in the whole world, except that particular portion of the globe from which they derive their own magnificent revenues, — and thousands of pounds are spent annually in reforming and civilizing the savage tribes of the desert and forest. Yet in the face of all this philanthropy, the horrible, almost incredible miseries of the London poor daily increase, and we know for a fact that, while money is constantly subscribed for the conversion of the foreign heathen to holy Christianity, an enormous population of native heathen, far more degraded than the most uncultured desert bar-

barians, swarm at the very doors of the wealthy would-be benefactors of humanity, and demand redress for their bitter and long-standing wrongs. It is a sorrow and scandal to us that it should be so; but so it is.

The neglect of years, and the rapid turn of the wheel of modern progress, has produced the London Savage, — a being more wild, more reckless and terrible than the most bloodthirsty Zulu that ever revelled in human gore. He may be met anywhere; — he lurks in dens behind some of the stateliest mansions of Kensington and Belgravia. Rolling in filthy straw, in company with several other savages like himself, who, with their wives and children, all lie together in one damp, dark, foul-smelling room, he lays his plans of robbery and murder with the same equanimity and self-applause as a fashionable preacher pens his sermon for the coming Sunday. He knows no difference between virtue and vice, — morality or the reverse. His reasoning is simple, — in fact, quite primitive; — if someone else happens to have what he wants and does not possess, such as a gold watch, for instance, or a purse of money, he considers himself justified in taking it, if not by persuasion, then by force. If

he commits murder, he is perhaps caught and sentenced to be hung. Does he care? Has he any remorse? Any dread of death? Not he! He goes to the gallows with entire fortitude and dies like an ill-used martyr. His children remember him as such, and follow his example in due time, so that the hangman is still a necessary official.

One of the cruellest answers given to the pamphlet known as "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London," was that "London must wait." — On the very top of this a letter was published in *The Times* from a Missionary, who begged for contributions towards providing suitable homes for English working-men in Paris. It is most probable that the Dukes and Earls and Marquises of this land came readily forward in response to the appeal, leaving the London Savage in his old quarters, the centres of typhoid, cholera and small-pox, without more than a reiteration of what had already been said — "London must wait." And still Savage London does wait — in a peculiar way of its own. It is as much as one's life is worth to walk on the Thames Embankment after dark, — people are knocked down or mysteriously made away with on Hampstead Heath, Wandsworth Common, and other lonely,

outlying places, and the very policemen, whose anxious vigilance and active *surveillance* cannot be too highly estimated, are in such danger of their lives that they often need fire-arms in order to protect themselves during the exercise of their duty. Moreover, the London Savage has recently been making himself familiar with dynamite. Naturally, he approves of it, and chuckles over the admirable rapidity of its action in destroying life. He tries it in order to be quite certain of its effect. He has been known to place some on a railway line, just as a train is about to pass, just by way of experiment. The female London Savage has also found out a suitable pastime for herself in vitriol throwing, — a pastime the idea of which she has borrowed from her sister the Paris "Pétroleuse." How delightful to scarify, blister, and burn into utter hideousness the face of some man or woman who has become repulsive to her! It is a task which entirely satisfies her feminine instincts. Some grave clergyman will perhaps take her very seriously to task for having smothered her baby under a mattress. She will not see the force of his reasoning in the least. She will state rough facts in the face of his fancy argu-

ments. She will tell him there was no room for the baby in a den measuring seven feet by ten, where fifteen people huddle together, — she will also prove that there was no food for the baby, and no clothes either. It would have died anyhow. So she goes cheerfully to prison for having smothered her child, and as she goes, she administers a few consolatory oaths to her brute companions, who congratulate her on her good fortune. Good fortune? Certainly. She goes to prison, and prison means shelter and wholesome food at regular hours every day. For the English Government takes the tenderest care of its criminals. They are visited by the ministers of the Church, who bless them solemnly and commend their fragments of black souls to the care of Heaven; and lady missionaries sit with them for an hour at a time, and give them good books and pretty little tracts to read. But for the miserable beings, who, in the midst of their misery, still feebly try to cling to honesty, there is no help — no hope. And so the evil grows and widens, like the ever moving ball of snow which gradually becomes an avalanche. The blood yet runs cold to read of the horrors of the French Revolution of 1789,

— of the unbridled ferocity of the Paris mob, to whom the crushing of human life was no more than the killing of mosquitoes. The graphic picture of the whole frightful scene drawn by Thomas Carlyle is not so much a history as a warning. The English temperament is much colder, more stolid and patient than that of the French, — but at the same time it is more deliberately cruel and brutal when once awakened to a sense of injustice, and smarting under inexplicable wrong. The London Savages, once let loose, would be more dangerous to deal with than even those Savages of Paris were. And who can tell how long London *will* wait? How long will its ferocious patience, the patience of a tiger waiting for its prey, continue to hold out? One thing might certainly be done in the meantime, and that is, to draw in all the money that is pouring out of the great English capital to the relief of foreigners, and let it flow into the proper channels. Charity begins at home. It is a mockery of wealth to use it for the benefit of strange nations who, as soon as not, will turn and rend us, while neglecting our own people. The immense river of golden coin which rushes abundantly out of

England on the least appeal to its generosity, should be turned in the right direction, — homeward. Let it flow down the city slums, — let it reach to the wretched hovels that lie within a stone's throw of the King's Palace of Windsor, — let it sweep away some of the accumulated mountains of misery in the homes of the poor, — and Savage London, melted to the heart, may yet learn to believe in a beneficent Creator, for whom at present it has less honour and less faith than the most abandoned heathen worshipper of wooden idols. Recognize the fact, good people! — Christian London is more than half heathen, and the sooner this terrible truth is taken to heart, the more hope there is of those who are sincerely religious and charitable hastening to the immediate rescue of their perishing kindred, the limit of whose stupefied endurance has been nearly reached, and when reached must culminate in some appalling disaster. It is a matter which at Christmas-time calls for some consideration among the numerous other claims which are set forward as worthy of remembrance by the influential and wealthy. Persons who give Two Thousand Guineas for a horse might ponder it, — and

those who are rushing abroad to spend their money on the gambling tables of Monte Carlo might also take it to heart. The "Hooligan" is made of human material like ourselves; he is not a special sort of manufacture. He is the unfortunate result of long years of neglect inflicted on his class by his brothers; yet he is our blood and kin, and perhaps if we knew all about him, we should find that his faults of breeding and education are not so much his as the faults of those who leave him neglected in his lair. The King, whose earnest exertions on behalf of the "Housing of the Poor" have scarcely been done full justice to, has, perhaps, nothing more at heart than the desire to remedy the evils of overcrowding, and to alleviate the misery resulting from want of proper breathing-room and light, — and Queen Alexandra's gentle and noble efforts in the same direction have added an extra grace to the many which adorn her life and character. But both the King and the Queen naturally expect response and assistance from the wealthier of their subjects in so great and necessary a work. Missionaries in India who spend time and money in endeavouring to "convert" Hin-

doos, who are often more truly religious than some of their would-be teachers, would do well to turn their efforts towards "Hooliganism," and Jesuit priests who go about collecting funds to build more Roman Catholic Churches than are needed or wished for in a Protestant country, would build a truer and far more convincing Spiritual fabric if they would use some of their surplus cash for the rescue of such London heathens who have never heard of either Protestantism or Romanism, or indeed of any religious faith at all. To such blighted and disastrous lives in the purlieus of the great city, Christ would assuredly go first of all, if He ever came again with the Divine Christmas message of "Good-Will."

ONE ROSE!

ONE ROSE!

ONE — dropped from her breast
As she passed along,
Like a fluttering bird from a nest,
Or the final note of a song —
One — as fragile and fair
As the woman herself, I swear!
With the light of a thousand sunbeams caught
in the waves of her golden hair!

One — white as the snow —
It fell at her feet,
When her laughter, clear and low,
Replied to the fervid heat
Of my love-words wild and vain,
And my heart grew numb with pain
As her mirthful mockery crushed my heart,
and maddened my foolish brain.

Farewell to my dream!
I should have known
That however fair she may seem,
Her heart is as cold as stone,

A mirror of social vice,
A sparkling nugget of ice,
Valued at "so much" or more, ready for sale
at its market price!

A "society star?"
Yes, that is true:
She is proud; such women are;
Yet perhaps she will smile on me!
Your turn will come, maybe:
Who knows? perchance you will see
The lying glances, the treacherous smiles she
lately lavished on me.

If so, you can say
You met me to-night:
Tell her I went my way
Despising her trumpery slight:
Man, after all, is king —
He can laugh at the little sting
Of a woman's scorn, when the woman her-
self is so poor and low a thing.

One rose! — it will fade
Ere an hour be past —
Such hothouse blossoms are only made,
Like women — to wither fast —

Its leaves will upcurl and die
In an odorous silent sigh,
And only its little ghost will speak of my
transient love gone by.

One rose — it is mine
To keep for a while —
I fancy it will not greatly pine
For the loss of her ladyship's smile —
By a cluster of diamonds prest,
'T was slain on her chilly breast;
Together we 'll go, the rose and I — we
both have need of rest!

THE LAURELS OF THE BRAVE

THE LAURELS OF THE BRAVE

SHE was a thin, tall, "willowy" woman, long-necked, auburn-haired ("Titian Gloire," her *coiffeur* called it on the bottle), and dark-eyed, with a carefully got-up complexion and an expensive way of wearing her clothes. She never paid less than six guineas for a pair of corsets, thirty guineas for a "plain" morning gown, and ten guineas for a "simple" hat. The prices of the various other articles of her attire may thus, by these little items, be dimly guessed at. Whenever she moved, shook her silk skirts, or played with her handkerchief, a faint odour was exhaled from her person, — an odour supposed to be "violets," but more like the last trail of a musk-rat. She passed for being very romantic and *spirituelle*, owing to a trick she had of clasping her hands and looking up at the sky or the ceiling in a sudden ecstasy. She would do this, often without warning, in the middle of an ordinary commonplace conversation, greatly

disconcerting everyone else who happened to be present. Good-natured people said it was her "soul-forces" that got too strong for her on these occasions,—others shook their heads darkly and hinted that she had "too much brain." As a matter of fact, however, neither soul-forces nor brain-power were concerned in her composition, and the rapt "pose" which she found so effective was the chief stock-in-trade of the "leading lady" at one of the theatres, from whom she had carefully copied it. Few women studied "histrionic" attitudes as arduously as she did, and the chief object with which she ever attended a play at all was that she might take mental note of the languishing movements, the roll of the painted eyes, and the airs and graces generally of the newest fashionable heroine of the footlights,—not because the said heroine was an Actress, for that she never is by any chance nowadays,—but simply that she might copy her "poses" and her gowns. Yet with all the trouble she took, and all the nervous excitement she suffered lest any "other" woman of her particular style and contour should turn up and compete with her on her own lines of conquest, she was not so much in the "social swim" as she craved to be. No.

There was some fatality about it. She—"the beautiful Mrs. Arteroyd," as she was occasionally called in society paragraphs (she having paid the modest sum of Five Pounds for this distinction to the enterprising lady journalist who "arranged" for such special items of interest)—was not yet where she fain would be. She had made a poor marriage,—or so she considered it. Her husband was only a Colonel in the British army—just a man with a V.C. Other women, older and plainer, had "caught" or bought real live Russian princes. They—the said princes—had not any V.C., but then their wives were princesses and went everywhere, and everybody said, "There is the Princess Rumstuffski!" or, "How charming the Princess Numskullskoff is looking!" Why was she not a Princess Rumstuffsky? Why had an unkind fate elected her to be the wife of a mere British officer with a V.C. won in the prime of his manhood? And with absolutely no fortune! Though, when she first fell in love with him—(what a stupid thing to fall in love!)—she had considered him very well off, and herself very lucky. He was the only son of a saving father who had left him an income of about three thousand a year, the

result of capital soundly and safely invested. But what was three thousand a year to a *spirituelle* creature of super-sensitive intelligence who wore six-guinea corsets? Nothing!—absolutely nothing! Especially at such a time as the present, when excessive ostentation, vulgar, brazen wealth is the only pass-key into what is called "society." Poor Mrs. Arteroyd! She had tried all sorts of ways to obtain a firm footing on that slippery ladder which, like the magic Bean-Stalk of the fairy-tale, is supposed to lead aspiring Jacks and Jills to that mysterious region variously entitled "The Upper Ten" and "the top of the tree,"—but what success she had won was too perilously like failure to be altogether gratifying. Sitting in her cosy boudoir, she thought it all over, the while she read the morning papers sulkily,—they were full of war-news,—nothing but war—war—war! How sick she was of the war!—how tired of all the deaths and wounds, and blunders and casualties and bothers generally! She skimmed quickly through the list of "killed and wounded," just to see whether her husband was among them,—not that her heart beat one pulse more anxiously during the search,—she was only interested in so

far as that if he were killed she would have to go into mourning.

"And I look my worst in black," she commented, as she glanced from name to name of all those included in the terrible "Death Roll of Honour." But no — Colonel John Arteroyd, V.C., was not mentioned as either slain or wounded or sick of fever — there was no allusion to him anywhere as being in or out of action, and when she had made herself quite sure of this, she breathed more freely. There was no occasion for her to "look her worst" just yet.

"Poor old Jack!" she said — "I 'm glad he 's all right so far! I don't know why I look for his name in the papers at all, I 'm sure, — for of course I should hear direct from the War Office if — if anything had happened. But I dare say he 's really as happy as the day is long. He was mad to go to the Transvaal, and now he 's there I hope he likes it. He was made for active service — but at home — Oh dear! — what a bore he is!"

Her hard brown eyes flashed coldly up and down the columns of news again, like sharp bits of steel getting ready to cut through the insen-

sible paper, — what a number of extraordinary things were being associated with the war, she thought, — and what an exceptionally "good time" some of the "leaders" of society were making for themselves out of "Tommy Atkins"!

"Fancy!" she suddenly exclaimed, as she caught sight of a paragraph placed prominently among other items of "court and society" gossip — "There's that horrible little fat woman, the Marquise Dégagée, pushing herself everywhere, all because she's getting up a Babies' Fund! What an idea! 'To provide feeding-bottles and perambulators for all infants under twelve months, whose fathers are at the front.' And she's actually going to have a 'Royal Fancye Faire' for *that!*"

In her excitement she jumped up and went to the window to read the objectionable announcement over again.

"Not a mention of Me anywhere!" she said, with a pettish stamp of her foot — "it's too bad! And I'm sure the woman who writes these things actually lives on me. Drops in to lunch, — makes me ask her to dinner, — takes me to dressmakers who of course pay *her* for bringing *me*, — and yet with all my good-nature she is n't

a bit grateful — she does nothing for me. The fact is, I must do something for myself. But what shall it be?"

She sat down — or rather she "dropped" languidly into a chair, with that particular scented rustle of herself which she had long practised and loved, — and meditated. Taking up one of the fashionable "weeklies" which cater especially for the feminine world, her brows puckered vexedly, as on its first page she saw the "idealized" picture of a lady with a turned-up nose, and a tiara, labelled "The Marquise Dégagée," and read the following interesting article.

"TOMMY'S BABY.

"The Marquise Dégagée, who is such a well-known favourite in aristocratic circles" ("What a lie!" ejaculated Mrs. Arteroyd — "She was never heard of till last season, when Lady Pawpurse started 'running her'!") "is organizing a charming 'Fancye Faire' which will take place in the rooms of the Hotel Beaumonde early next month. The object of the festival is to raise an 'Infants' Fund' which will provide feeding-bottles, bone-rings, teething-pads and other necessaries, including perambulators, for all infants

under twelve months, whose fathers are at the front. Royalty, always ready whenever a kind action is concerned, has extended its gracious patronage to the function, and Herr Bunkumopf, violinist of His Serene Highness Prince Dummer-Esel, will give his valuable services to the entertainment gratuitously. Some of the prettiest ladies of the *corps de ballet* of the Imperial Smoke-House will preside over tea and coffee stalls and will distribute the programmes, and His Serene Highness Prince Dummer-Esel has signified his intention of being present at the opening ceremony. In order not to delay the useful progress of this deserving charity, all mothers in need of feeding-bottles, 'prams,' and other baby-comforts are requested to send in their names, together with a copy of their marriage certificates, and the number of their husbands' regiments to the Hon. Secretary, Miss Jane Muddleup, at the residence of the Marquise Dégagée, Belgrave Square. The Marquise Dégagée is, as everybody knows, a true daughter of the old French nobility, and this generous interest of hers in 'Tommy's Baby' will do much to improve the somewhat strained relations existing just now between France and

England. The Marquise has written a touching poem for the occasion, and one of the special features of the 'Fancye Faire' will be her own recitation of it, in that pretty broken English which, as hosts of her social friends are aware, makes her conversation so peculiarly charming. We are permitted to produce one verse of this dainty and delicately humorous lyric: —

"TOMMY'S BEBE!

"Hélas! — Le paubre bébé!
What will its muzzer do?
It is sans la bouteille
Which it suck all ze day through!
Hélas! — Le paubre bébé!
It can do nozing but cry!
For its fazer, ze 'Tommy' has gone!
Saying 'adieu!' bye-bye!

"We must not forget to mention that Messrs. Shrewd and Sly, makers of perambulators to the Royal Family, have kindly given one of their 'Empire Model Prams' to be raffled for, for the benefit of the Fund. Anyone sending a postal order for One Shilling will receive an elegantly mounted photograph of 'Tommy's Pram,' together with a beautiful copy, printed

in mezzotint, with a specially designed "Art" cover, of the Marquise Dégagée's appealing verses. We recommend the public to lose no time in sending their shillings to Miss Jane Muddleup, who will, as far as possible, attend to each applicant in turn. No loyal mother and mistress of an English home should be without the picture of 'Tommy's Pram' and the inspiring lyric of 'Tommy's Bébé.'"

Mrs. Arteroyd gave a short contemptuous laugh.

"Inspiring lyric! Stuff and rubbish! Absolute gibberish!"

She read the "appealing" stanza again.

"Hélas! — Le pauvre bébé!
What will its muzzer do?
It is sans la bouteille
Which it suck all ze day through!
Hélas! — Le pauvre bébé!
It can do nozing but cry!
For its fazer, ze 'Tommy' has gone!
Saying 'adieu!' bye-bye!"

She threw down the journal in a rage — a real rage this time.

"Detestable little cat!" she said — "I can see her at it! Dressed by Worth, of course,

and with all her diamonds on, reciting her trash before that ridiculous old Dummer-Esel, who does n't know the difference between verse and prose, — smirking and smirking and giving herself all the airs of a Paris stage soubrette! And Royalty is going to take *her* up, is it? Not if I know it! It shall take me up first!"

Her eyes flashed, and for once her cheeks were a fine crimson without the aid of rouge. She looked at herself in the glass, — ran her white fingers through her "Titian Gloire" hair, and pulled it over on either side of her ears till it looked wild and wonderful, — opened her eyelids wide, — blinked them to note the effect of her long eyelashes, — then smiled languishingly at her own reflection and said, —

"I will do a poem!"

In this observation she strictly preserved her honesty. She did not say even to herself that she would "think" a poem, or "write" a poem. She said she would "do" a poem. And she did. She shut herself up in her room all day and went to work. She happened to have an unusually large collection of music-hall ditties and "soldiers' songs," which had been sung in happier times by her absent husband. She

turned these over, perused them carefully, and eliminated "bits" therefrom. It was hard work, but she persevered, and like a child piecing a puzzle together, she fitted in lines and halves of lines until, by dint of close consideration and painstaking study of the music-hall "models," she hit out something like a feeble imitation. And finally, after making herself quite feverish and thirsty with worry and fatigue and the confusion of brain resulting from "variety" ballad-mixtures, she succeeded in "arranging" the following colloquial and effective stanzas, much to her own satisfaction.

"Hullo, Tommy! Wheer'ye off to?"
"I'm a leavin' old England's shore, —
I'm ordered on active service,
An' mebbe I'll come back no more —
I'm bound to polish off Kruger —
'Twill be a tough job, old pal! —
I don't want to give no trouble —
But — just look after my gal!

REFRAIN

"Just look after my gal, will ye?
While I'm frontin' the fire an' the foe —
Like a good old pal, look after my gal —
An' Gawd bless ye wheerever I go!"

"That will do as a beginning!" said Mrs. Arteroyd, nibbling anxiously at the pencil with which she had "produced" these lines. "It suggests love and a spice of immorality. His 'gal' — one of the silly creatures who walk out with him, not 'on the strength,' of course. It's a change, and it's sure to go down! Not his wife, — and not his baby — ugh! you little wretch! (this was a side apostrophe to the absent and unconscious Marquise Dégagée) — but his 'gal'! Old Dummer-Esel will appreciate *that!*"

She bit her pencil again and thought, — then glanced over a few more music-hall songs, and went on —

"She's a weak an' a lovin' creetur!
Not 'on the strength,' you bet!
An' 't is 'ard to be leavin' her lonely,
Though I hopes we 'll be married yet, —
But there 's death lurkin' down in they kopjes,
And graves in the golden Transvaal —
Never mind! — it 's for King and country —
But — just look after my gal!

REFRAIN

"Just look after my gal, will ye?
While I 'm frontin' the fire an' the foe —
Like a good old pal, look after my gal —
An' Gawd bless ye wheerever I go!"

Having got thus far, Mrs. Arteroyd paused and considered. She looked at the clock and saw that its hands pointed to five, nearly the time for afternoon tea. And she had been "making verses" ever since mid-day with only a brief interval for lunch! Her face was hot and feverish, her lips dry, — her brain — her brain? — yes, her brain was actually getting "fagged." She knew now what literary geniuses suffered when they overtaxed their nervous forces.

"Positively I look quite tired!" she said, gazing at herself in the convenient mirror to which she always turned in moments of harassment. "I have worked hard! I don't think I'll do any more Tommy-poetry now, — I can finish it to-morrow. I'd better go and see Mrs. Long-Adder at once. She's 'off work,' and as sick as she can be of not showing herself. I'm sure she'll be glad of a chance to come forward with 'Tommy's Gal.' 'Tommy's Gal!' — that must be the title of the thing, of course! That, and no other!" She wrote it down and smiled at it admiringly. "Isn't it splendid! 'Tommy's Gal!' Won't it just 'draw'! All the horrid men who have their own 'gals' on

the sly will cough with emotion over it, — and all the idiotic women who have managed to get 'left' by Tommies, civil and military, will cry, — that is, if Mrs. Long-Adder can be persuaded to recite it. Oh, she *must* do it! With that long peaky face of hers, and monstrous Chinese eyes, and thick wedges of all-coloured hair coming over her ears, and her wibbly-wobbly way of swinging her hips about, she will be a *succès d'enthousiasme!* And so shall I!"

Her smile widened into an open dazzle of white teeth which irritable and unimpressionable persons might have called a triumphant grin, — and enveloping herself in a mysterious and wonderful cloak, all frills, old lace, sable-tails and musk-rat odour, she drove off in a quick hansom to a certain dubious little "flat" somewhere about Victoria Street, which for the moment was the residence of the heart-enslaving, eye-fascinating, purse-emptying, cheque-demanding "caprice" of the stage, Mrs. Long-Adder. Much of the charm of this lady consisted in the delicious vagueness and mystery of her surroundings. She came "from America." What part of America she came from did not transpire. She had a husband, — somewhere, — but who

he was, and how he "fixed up" things for himself, also did not transpire. Suffice it to say of him that he was never seen with his wife. Much may be comprehended in that brief statement. Mrs. Long-Adder was by way of being an actress, — that is to say she could not act. She wore gowns and glided about on the stage in them. London went mad over her. The *Spread Eagle Conqueror*, a society journal published in New York, called her "our matchless American beauty," like a new sort of cigarette. And she who was "not received" in the intelligent circles of American culture, had a distinctly "good time" of it in England. Mrs. Arteroyd found her reclining in a long sofa-chair or chair-sofa, whatever the piece of "Art" furniture may be called, arrayed in a serpentine tea-gown of "diamanté" lace over satin "rayonnant," — and if Mrs. Arteroyd smelt like one musk-rat, Mrs. Long-Adder smelt like two. The celebrated stage-siren rose as her visitor entered, and extended a white hand, admirably manicured, and loaded with sparkling rings, the offerings of "homage" from various adorers. And then both perfumed ladies embraced, — that sisterly embrace of social feeling, in which

the one woman looks gracefully over the shoulder of the other and breathes a gentle "Cat!" to the neutral air.

"How sweet of you to come!" murmured Mrs. Long-Adder cooingly, — "I have been *so* dull! Alone all day! Such an unusual thing for *me!*"

And her sinuous form vibrated with a tremor of triumphant coquetry.

Mrs. Arteroyd smiled discreetly, but said nothing. Sitting down by the chair-sofa she critically studied the woman, who was reported in club parlance to "have old Dummer-Esel under her thumb."

"Not a bit good-looking really," she commented inwardly — "It's all her get-up. Put her hair quite plain and dress her like an ordinary respectable matron and she'll be downright ugly. Two of her front teeth are false, I see — and her skin is simply *covered*, — *covered* with that new Paris mixture which "defies detection." Her hair is certainly *quite* wonderful — she must have tried all the new tints on it in turn. I suppose it's the Chinese eyes that "take" — horrid Mongolian things! They work long-wise into slits, — and that corner-look always fetches the

men. Anyway, she 's the only person possible for *my* business."

And, forthwith, putting on all her own airs and graces, and talking in softly confidential tones, she "plucked out the heart of her mystery" at once, and asked Mrs. Long-Adder to recite publicly the "poem" she had written on "Tommy's Gal."

Mrs. Long-Adder looked at her in a sort of innocent child-like wonder.

"*You* have written a poem?" she said, with just the faintest unkind emphasis on the pronoun "you."

Mrs. Arteroyd flushed and bit her lip. Then she laughed sweetly.

"Yes! It's so easy, you know, to write about Tommy! Everybody can do it!"

Mrs. Long-Adder laughed too. Not because she was particularly moved to laughter, but because she wanted to show how much more artistic and melodious *her* laugh was in comparison to Mrs. Arteroyd's.

"That is quite true!" she said, half-closing her "Mongolian" eyes in an apparent voluptuous dream. "And 'Tommy's Gal' is a good title. I like it!"

She gently rolled herself to and fro on her sofa-chair or chair-sofa. She was one of those women who glory in going without corsets, and she had a marvellous way of writhing and twisting her figure under a tea-gown, suggestive of the first stirrings of a snake in long grass. She had paralyzed and stricken His Highness of Dummer-Esel into a fatuous condition of senile rapture by that special twist of herself, and had caused his little swine-like eyes to almost tumble out on his fat cheeks with the intensity of his admiring leer. She did that twist just now, and Mrs. Arteroyd instantly wondered whether she could imitate it.

"Have you the poem with you?" she asked in rich drowsy accents, broken by a half sigh.

"Only two verses," answered Mrs. Arteroyd. "I thought it better to see if you liked them before doing any more. But I can easily turn out half a dozen —"

"Oh no! Please, no! Four will be quite sufficient," said Mrs. Long-Adder — "The public, — especially the cultured public — will never stand more than four verses of anything. Let me hear the first two!"

Thus adjured, Mrs. Arteroyd began, as stagily as she could —

"Hullo, wheer'ye off to, Tommy?"

And Mrs. Long-Adder lay back among her silken cushions and listened, blinking sleepily through her long black lashes, the while a faint half-satiric, half-pleased expression came and went on the face which certain of her admirers called "so *weirdly* beautifully!" Before the second verse was ended, she rose up to her full height in a dramatic attitude of inspired resolution, while the "satin rayonnant" and the "diamanté lace" fell around her in sweeping, glorious, glittering folds. She saw her game and was prepared to play it.

"That will do!" she said. "Yes! — it has every chance of a draw. I think I can manage it!"

She moved to and fro, softly and swishingly.

"Yes! Finish it!" And through the tangles of her hair she smiled a bewildering smile. "There's a Bazaar going to be held at the Gilded Rooms for the benefit of Tommy next week — I'll offer to recite it there — dressed in khaki!"

"You will!" cried Mrs. Arteroyd, rapidly

considering how that "weird" lady would look "in khaki," and as rapidly deciding that she must have her own way anyhow — "You really will! And do you think that your friend, the German prince —"

"Dummer-Esel? Of course! He will do anything to please me!" said Mrs. Long-Adder — "You may be quite sure *he* will come and hear me. But you know you must give me a hundred guineas for the job."

"Must I?" And Mrs. Arteroyd's face fell a little.

"Why of course you must! You must pay *me*, and I shall give the money to the Fund. That's how these things are done."

"Oh, very well!" said Mrs. Arteroyd hurriedly — "I don't mind —"

"I should think you didn't!" And again the temporary favorite of Prince Dummer-Esel smiled — "It will be a splendid advertisement for you — I mean for your pretty poem! Now do please go home and finish it as charmingly as you have begun, — get it type-written and send it to me at once, with your cheque. I'll manage all the rest for you! It will be an immense success — simply immense!"

"Do you really think so?" asked Mrs. Arteroyd eagerly, as she rose to go.

"I am sure of it! By the way, your husband is at the front, is n't he?"

"Yes. Jack is somewhere near Ladysmith, I believe."

"Ah! That makes it all the more interesting! Now *do* go home and finish 'Tommy's Gal.' My recitation of it will quite take the colour of the Marquise Dégagée's 'Fancye Faire'!"

"Ah — h — h — h!" and Mrs. Arteroyd drew a sharp breath.

Mrs. Long-Adder's Chinese eyes glittered — she laughed.

"I hate that Marquise! Don't you?"

For the moment Mrs. Arteroyd felt that she loved Mrs. Long-Adder. But she was discreet.

"She is very — er — very — er — well! — pushing!" she said cautiously.

"Pushing! Oh, that 's nothing! I admire push. You *must* push nowadays if you want to be anywhere. But she is so — so *vulgar!* So *very* theatrical in private life! Yes! — your poem is lovely! Good-bye, dear! What an exquisite cloak!"

Moved by their mutual detestation of the Marquise Dégagée, these dear women kissed each other again — this time without looking over each other's shoulders, and Mrs. Arteroyd departed in high satisfaction, leaving Mrs. Long-Adder to roll gently and voluptuously on her sofa-chair and to laugh to herself as she thought of the "effect" she would make on the mind of Prince Dummer-Esel, when dressed "in khaki"!

In a few days everything was arranged as triumphantly as the most ambitious advertisement-seeker could desire. Mrs. Arteroyd finished her "poem" effectively thus: —

"I ain't much given to blubberin',
But a somethin' blinded my eye
When that there gal came to the station
Last night to wish me good-bye!
And now 'ere I am at Southampton,
Under orders from bloomin' Pall-Mall,
An' we sails in a hour for Capetown —
So — just look after my gal!

REFRAIN

"Just look after my gal, will ye?
While I 'm frontin' the fire an' the foe —
Like a good old pal, look after my gal —
An' Gawd bless ye wheerever I go!

"If I fall, of course I 'll fall fightin'
For the honour an' name of the Flag —
An' I 'll only be one of ten thousand,
Who 'll die for that rummy old rag!
But we 're off — Good-bye, England! — I 'll trust ye —
The great British Nation 's my pal!
Pass the hat round! — and say when I 'm done for,
'We 'll all look after his gal!'

REFRAIN

"Yes, England, look after my gal, will ye?
While I 'm frontin' the fire an' the foe,
Be a faithful pal, and look after my gal —
An' Gawd bless ye wheerever I go!"

When Mrs. Long-Adder heard the final verse, her delight knew no bounds. She at once saw what capital could be made out of calling the "great British Nation" the "pal" of Tommy Atkins, and of giving his "gal" in trust to England. What a point for patriotic pathos! She practised the inflexions of her voice before a mirror.

"Pass the hat round!" This, with demanding fervour, accompanied by the instant action of lifting the hat from the head, and holding it out to the audience. "And say when I 'm done

for." Tears in the voice here, with a quickly effective droop of the head and a faint gasp. Then with a burst of enthusiasm and tenderness —"We 'll all look after his gal!"

"It will go like wildfire!" said Mrs. Long-Adder to herself, as she got into her tights, and tried her "khaki" uniform —"Simply like wildfire! That woman Arteroyd is too stupid for anything. She thinks she has worked out a good trick for herself, and so she has, in a way, but she does n't seem to see one bit what a first-rate business she is starting *me* on! *Won't* I fool old Dummer-Esel! *He'll* have to look after *his* 'gal,' you bet, or my name is n't Myrtle Long-Adder!"

And acting on this resolve, she very soon set the ball rolling. London, like a big child waiting to be amused, rose to the occasion, and the forthcoming bazaar at the Gilded Rooms, when "the beautiful Mrs. Long-Adder" would recite "an exquisite poem by the gifted Mrs. Arteroyd, whose gallant husband, Colonel John Arteroyd, V.C., was now fighting for England's glory in South Africa," became the talk of the town. The Marquise Dégagée heard of it and nearly fainted. The Bazaar would actually take

place before her "Fancye Faire," — before she could have the chance of reciting "Tommy's Bébé!" in the presence of Prince Dummer-Esel! This was an unlooked-for catastrophe. And the "strained relations between France and England" were not improved by the contretemps. However, there was no help for it, — and the deeply disappointed authoress of "Tommy's Bébé!" had to conceal her chagrin under an appearance of indifference to the world of fashion, which poured into her rooms in the kindly way the world of fashion has, to tell her of her existing rival, — of the splendour of the preparations at the Gilded Rooms, — how "poor old Dummer-Esel" was really quite off his head with excitement, — what interest he was taking in the affair! How Her Highness of Gottenken was going! — how the Countess of Tiddlywinks would be there! — how the Duchess of Gloriosa would have a stall! — how that delightful dancer (not proper, my dear, but so clever!), that delightful dancer who must be nameless, because so very very bad, would assist in the selling of cigarettes — and Mrs. Long-Adder! — oh yes! — Mrs. Long-Adder's recitation would be "the thing of the day!"

"And Mrs. Arteroyd," said the breathless gossips, "is simply wonderful! *She* wrote the poem that Mrs. Long-Adder is to recite!—fancy that! And that poor man of hers at the front! And she's got a gown from Paris that's perfectly gorgeous;—and I know the man who does her hair, and he told me the other day that he was sure she was going to be a social favourite, as she had just bought three new tails of hair! Think of that!—three new tails! And such a gown! My dear, it makes one's mouth water! And where she gets the money heaven knows! For that poor man at the front has only got three thousand a year!"

"He may be dead by this time!" said the Marquise with a pretty little shudder. "Poor ting! He may be dead!"

For a moment there was silence. The crowd of fashionable chatterers felt distinctly uncomfortable.

The Marquise smiled,—she had made an effect and she was pleased.

"Yes, he may be dead!" she repeated. "And if ze news come while ze bazaar go on—*hélas!* Come and have some tea!"

The noisy voices and laughter broke out again

— the sudden spell of horror was dispersed. And a week later on the society throng "rushed" to the bazaar at the Gilded Rooms, — to see and to be seen — to watch Prince Dummer-Esel with slavish zeal, — to criticise the lovely Mrs. Long-Adder — and to congratulate Mrs. Arteroyd on "Tommy's Gal!" And truly Mrs. Arteroyd was in her glory. She was quite clever enough to perceive that Mrs. Long-Adder meant to make capital for herself out of the business, and she had previously determined that, having paid a hundred guineas to be "talked about," talked about she would be. And she spared no pains to win her object. Her dress was a "creation" of some wonderful clinging stuff of delicate amber shades softly interwoven, and impressing the eye with the suggestion of early primroses, — it fitted like a glove, and displayed the contour of the six-guinea corsets to perfection. Men said — poor, dear, deluded men! — "a fine figure of a woman!" — and women eyed her with that casual contempt which is the greatest compliment ill-dressed dames can pay to a well-dressed one. When presented to Prince Dummer-Esel, she curtsied with a fine carelessness, and gave him an upward smile of childlike ques-

tioning innocence, — whereat His Highness chuckled and scented fresh game.

"We are going to give you a wreath of laurels, Mrs. Arteroyd," he graciously observed — "He — he —he —ha — ha! We are going to present you with the symbol of fame! — ha — ha! Pretty idea, is n't it — he — he! — Mrs. Long-Adder suggested it — ha — ha! — woman of ideas, Mrs. Long-Adder — a woman of ideas! Hum — ha! We shall have a collection for Tommy's Gal' in Mrs. L ong-Adder's hat, after your poem has been recited — in her hat — ha — ha! — the regular South African hat, you know, that goes with the khaki uniform — he — he! I shall put a Tenner into the hat — yes! — ha — ha! Mrs. Long-Adder's hat! — he — he — he — he! And instead of a bouquet we shall give you a laurel wreath! You can keep it, you see — he —ha! hang it up in the drawing-room at home, till your husband comes back — ha — ha! He 'll have some laurels too, then, I dare say! Got a V.C., has he? Good — good! Yes, very good! ha — ha!"

And with these intelligent and distinguished remarks, he took his seat in front of the audience, and Mrs. Arteroyd had the satisfaction of

being invited to sit beside him. Then there was a flourish of trumpets—a bit of "Soldiers of the King," played by the band—and then—and then—amid a burst of frantic applause, Mrs. Long-Adder stepped upon a platform, gorgeous with palms and exotics, and showed herself unblushingly, arrayed in "khaki" uniform as "Tommy" bound for the front! The plaudits were deafening. Mrs. "Tommy" Long-Adder "saluted." Prince Dummer-Esel grew apoplectically crimson with enthusiasm, and she turned one of her "Mongolian" eyes sideways upon him with a killing brilliancy. Then she began the doggerel lines, "Hullo, Tommy, wheer'ye off to!" reciting them with all the vulgar emphasis of that cheap, forced, sham sentiment which is the only emotional quality that succeeds nowadays in winning the attention of that still more vulgar, cheap, forced sham institution known as "smart society."

. . . . . .

Away in South Africa, far removed from all social hypocrisies, out on the bare brown *veldt*, and under the sickening scorch of a pitilessly hot sun, two men, friends and comrades-in-arms, were exploring the ground together and anxiously

surveying the Boer position. They had made their way cautiously along as extemporized scouts from the British camp to one particular spot which seemed a sheltered coign of vantage, to see if they could form any idea as to the extent of the enemy's defences. One of them, dark and broad-shouldered, lay flat, chest downwards on the grass, rifle in hand, looking up at his companion, who, tall and fair, and of an imposing figure, stood erect, gazing out far ahead with something of a dreamy expression softening the light of his keen grey eyes.

"I say, Arteroyd, had n't you better lie low?" said the recumbent man. "You need not make yourself a target for any marksman who may be inclined to try his aim."

"They have ceased firing for the present," and Colonel John Arteroyd, V.C., calmly took out his field glasses and prepared to adjust them. "That ridge opposite is deserted." As he spoke he glanced down at his friend and smiled. "Dandy Ferrers knows how to make himself comfortable, I think, even under possible fire! I shall have to report you at home as a funk! Lie low, indeed! However, you 're no safer than I am, if a shell comes our way."

Captain James Ferrers, called "Dandy" by all his friends at home, on account of his somewhat curious and capricious taste in neckties, laid down his rifle and took out his cigar-case.

"I suppose," he said slowly as he lit a precious "Havana," one of the last he had or would have, till he returned to England (if ever he returned) — "I suppose you really would n't care much? You 've got the V.C."

"Yes, I 've got the V.C." And Colonel Arteroyd unscrewed and polished his field glasses with scrupulous attention. "It 's the best thing a soldier can have. But it is n't everything."

Dandy Ferrers reddened with a quick sense of compunction.

"No — of course! — I forgot — there 's your wife — "

Arteroyd looked at him steadfastly.

"Yes, — there 's my wife. And she is the very reason why — as you say — I should n't care much."

"Is n't she good to you, old chap?" queried Dandy sympathetically.

Colonel Arteroyd smiled a trifle sadly.

"Good to me? Oh yes, I suppose so! But

— you see — when I married her — I — I loved her. That is what she did n't understand. When a man *loves* a woman — really *loves* her, you know — "

Dandy nodded gravely.

" Well — then, he likes to think of her as something altogether sacred — something removed and different to himself. We don't want women to be angels — no, — but something very near it. I wanted my wife to love me as I loved her — I wanted to feel that she was proud of me, and that if I could do a good thing at any time, she would be glad. A sort of giving her my laurels, you know, if I got any. Well — I soon found out she never would be glad *that* way. She wanted everything I could n't get. She went in for society, — I hate society. I can't smile when I 'm told to. I can't tell lies thirteen to the dozen. And unless you can do that sort of thing, society does n't want you. Then our little child — a boy — died when he was two. He was a jolly little chap, — he got very fond of me — used to play with my moustache and kiss me with all his little might — " Here Arteroyd paused and put his field glasses up to his eyes. Dandy

Ferrers puffed a big blue ring of cigar smoke up into the burning sky and thought it likely that the Colonel was not taking a particularly clear sight for the moment.

"Yes — that ridge is deserted," resumed Arteroyd coolly — "I thought I saw a moving speck — but I was mistaken. I believe they 've got no more ammunition up there."

"Go on with your story," said Ferrers softly.

"Oh, my story! It is n't much of a story, old chap! The little kiddie died, as I said. That rather knocked me up, — left me a bit lonely. Then my wife — well, she was all the time anxious to be a great figure in society. I wanted a home, — she did n't care about it. She said that housekeeping was a bore, and that she liked hotels better. And I — well! — I felt myself rather in her way. So I was glad to be ordered out on active service. You see, I want *her* to be happy, — for me, nothing matters."

Ferrers was silent.

"I have often thought," went on Arteroyd musingly, "especially since I 've been out here on these great bare stretches of burnt-up land, without a tree in sight, that death is n't the worst part of life. There 's a God somewhere, Dandy!"

"Of course there is!" answered Dandy promptly. "It's only the parsons that make us doubt it."

"When all the colour and gladness have gone out of the world for a man," said Arteroyd, talking to himself more than to his friend — "when he does not see any hope or beauty anywhere, — and when the one thing — the best thing of all — love — has failed him — and with it all he's done a bit of service to his country and lived as straight as he can — then I think death is often sent to him just in the nick of time — to save him from growing hard and mean and bitter — and to take his soul to his Maker while it's fairly clean and sweet — "

Ps—st! A sharp report — a sudden hiss through the air — a small but vivid flash of flame — a smothered cry —

"Look out, Dandy! — Take care of yourself! Good-bye!"

And Arteroyd's tall figure, erect a moment before, rolled over and over on the ground, and then lay motionless.

Reckless of all danger for himself, Ferrers rushed to his side.

"Jack!"

Silence! A peaceful smile rested on the lips of his fallen comrade, but no sound came from them, — no sound would ever come from them again. Shot straight through the heart, death had been instantaneous, and Ferrers, dropping on his knees by the slain man, broke out sobbing, and was not ashamed of his tears. He cared nothing if the same Boer marksman who had "picked out" one of the King's bravest officers with such deadly aim should make for him as well. Almost he hoped for the same fate, and once or twice looked longingly towards the ridge from whence the fatal bullet had sped. But there was not a creature in sight, — whoever it was that had hit his mark so well had retired, apparently satisfied, — and the unkind sun blazed fierce and furnace-like through clear and smokeless ether. With the salt drops of sorrow blistering his cheeks, poor "Dandy" reverently composed the limbs of the dead, and, crossing the yet warm hands upon the breast, unsheathed the sword that had so often flashed aloft in fight, as a signal of courage and of victory, and laid it, hilt heart-wards, between the stiffening fingers. Then planting his own rifle upright in the ground to mark and guard the spot till he could

return with help to bear the body into camp, he paused.

"Good-bye, Jack!" he said hoarsely — and with a simple boyish tenderness he kissed the dead man's forehead — "Good-bye! You said you did n't care much — and — considering everything — I don't suppose you did. But you got your V.C.! And God knows you deserved it!"

. . . . . .

The same evening that saw the Colonel's body wrapped in a soldier's blanket and committed to a South African grave, "the beautiful Mrs. Arteroyd," as she was now admittedly and eagerly entitled, owing to the proud fact of having been seen seated next to His Highness of Dummer-Esel, scored a great "social" success. Her verses, "Tommy's Gal," were received with hysterical enthusiasm, and the collection made in Mrs. Long-Adder's hat after the recitation amounted to two or three hundred pounds. An enterprising newspaper proprietor offered to buy the manuscript and "run it up to auction" for one of the Tommy-Funds, which offer Mrs. Arteroyd condescendingly accepted. And then, a classic wreath of laurels,

tied with the English colours, was presented to her by Prince Dummer-Esel himself with his own hands, accompanied by the gracious words —

"You must keep your laurels for your husband, Mrs. Arteroyd! Add them to his V.C.! — ha — ha — ! Add them to his V.C.!"

It was a proud moment! Expanding with her inward sense of elation, she received the garland with a studied affectation of graceful humility, and curtsied beneath the sunshine of the princely smile. Then, swinging the wreath picturesquely on one arm, she raised her head, flashed her eyes, and glanced round with an air of amused indifference on all the unsuccessful and discomfited women present, and in honey-sweet tones accepted an invitation to a private little supper-party at which His Highness of Dummer-Esel — with Mrs. Long-Adder — would be present, on a certain evening in the coming week. But —

Unfortunately there is always a "but." And it most often comes in when it is least wanted. Solomon's lament on the vanity of human wishes is the universal daily moan. And the disappointments which sometimes (though not

half often enough) fall to the lot of society-schemers and notoriety-hunters, almost call for a new Solomon to bewail them. Only two days after her triumph, when "the beautiful Mrs. Arteroyd" was just pleasantly engaged in reading a glowing description of herself and her gown in a favourite pictorial "weekly," a telegram, not of the appearance of every-day telegrams, was handed to her. Its envelope was red. Her heart gave a sudden leap of fear as she tore it open. Its contents were brief, and were dated from the War Office.

"Deeply regret — Colonel John Arteroyd, V.C. Killed. Ladysmith."

And Colonel John Arteroyd's widow stood rigid and tearless. Her "society" laurels were withered. She would have to "look her worst in black" after all!

TO "THE QUARTERLY"

TO "THE QUARTERLY"

With THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

GREETING, old friend! a merry Christmas time
To you, who nothing merry ever see; —
Great Murderer of poets in their prime, —
Why have you struck at me?

With vengeful hooks of sharpened critic-steel
You tortured giants in the days gone by, —
And now upon your creaking, rusty wheel,
You 'd break a Butterfly!

Alas! you 're far too cumbrous for such things!
Your heavy, clanking axle drags i' the chase; —
The happy Insect has the use of wings,
And keeps its Sunshine-place!

THE PRAYER OF THE SMALL COUNTRY M.P.

THE PRAYER OF THE SMALL COUNTRY M.P.

WHICH HE PRAYETH DAILY

THOU Especial Little God of Parliaments and Electors, with whom the greater God of the Universe has nothing whatever to do!—I beseech Thee to look upon me, Thy chosen servant, with a tolerant and favourable Eye! Consider with Leniency the singular and capricious Chance which has enabled me to become a Member of the Government, and grant me Thy protection, so that my utter Incapacity for the Post may never be discovered! Enable me, I implore Thee, to altogether dispense with the assistance of a certain Journalist and Press-Reporter in the composition of my Speeches! His Terms are high, and I am not sure of his Discretion! Impart unto me by spiritual telegraphy such Knowledge of the general Situation of Affairs that I may be able to furnish forth an occasional Intelligent Remark to the farmers of this Constituency, whose Loyalty to the Govern-

ment is as firm as their Trust in the Power of Beer! Give me the grace of such shallow Profundity and Pretension as shall convince Rustic minds of my complete Superiority to them in matters concerning their Interest and Welfare, and teach me to use their Simplicity for the convenient furtherance of my own Cunning! Fill me with such necessary and becoming Arrogance as shall make me overbearingly insolent to Persons of Intellect, while yet retaining that sleek Affability which shall cause me to appear a Fawning Flunkey to Persons of Rank! Enable me to so condescendingly patronize the Electors who gave me their majority that it shall seem I was returned through merit only, and not through Bribes and Beer! And mercifully defend me, O Beneficent little Deity, from all possibility of ever being called upon to address the House! I am no speaker, — and even if I were, I have no Ideas whereon to hang a fustian sentence! Thou Knowest, All-Knowing-One, that I have not so much as an Opinion, save that it is good for me, in respect of Social Advantage, to write M.P. after my name! And surely Thou dost also know that I have paid Two Thousand Pounds for the purchase of this small portion of

the Alphabet, making One Thousand Pounds per letter, which may humbly be submitted to Thee, O Calculating Ruler of Parliamentary Elections, as somewhat dear! But I have accepted these Conditions and paid the sum without murmuring; therefore of Thy goodness, be pleased to spare me from the utterance of even one word in the presence of my peers, concerning any Matter for the Advancement of Which I have been elected! For lo, — if I said as much as "Yea," it might be ill-advised; and yet again, if I said "Nay," it might be ill-timed! Inasmuch as I am compelled to rely on the Journalist and Press-Reporter before mentioned for whatsoever knowledge of matters political I possess, and it is just possible that he might, — through an extra dose of whisky-soda, — mislead me by erroneous information! O Lord of Press-Agencies and Grub-Street Eating-Houses, if it be possible unto Thee, relieve me of this Man! He charges more, so I am credibly informed, per Hundred Words than any other Inventor of Original Eloquence in the pay of the Unlettered and Inarticulate of the House! And it is much to be feared that he does not always keep his own Counsel! Wherefore,

gracious Deity, I would be Released with all convenient Speed from the Exercise of his Power! Rather than be constantly compelled to rely upon this Journalistic Wretch for Advice and Instruction, it will more conduce to my Comfort, — though possibly to my Fatigue, — to commit to Memory such portions of long-forgotten speeches spoken by Defunct Members of the House in the Past, as may be found suitable to the present needs of the Rural Population. The Corn-growing and Cattle-breeding Electors will not know from what Sources I derive my Inspiration, and the Editor of the Local Newspaper has not yet taken a degree in Scholarship. Moreover, the Dead are happily unable to send in any Claim for Damages against the Theft of their Ideas, which are as free to Independent Pilferers as the Original Plots of New and Successful Romances are free to the Dramatizing Robbers in the Stage-Purlieus, thanks to the Admirable Attitude of Dignified Indolence assumed by that Government to which I, one Fool out of Many, have the honour to belong! Finally, O Beneficent Lilliputian Deity which governeth matters Parliamentary, — grant me such a sufficient amount

of highly-respectable Mendacity as shall enable me to pass successfully for what I am not, at least, so far as Society in the Country is concerned! Fully aware am I, O Lord, that a Simulation of Ability will not always meet with approval in Town, though it has been occasionally known to do so! Therefore I am well content to sit in the House as one MUM, thus representing through myself an inaudible County! But in the County itself it shall seem to the Uninitiated that my thoughts are too deep for speech, while I retain in my own mind the knowledge of the Fact that my Humbug is too great for Expression!

To Thee, gentle yet capricious Deity, I commend all my Desires, praying Thee to keep the people whom I represent as Dumb and Inert as myself in matters concerning their own Welfare, for if they should chance to consider the Situation by the light of Common Sense, and me by the shrewd Appreciation of a Native Wit, it might occur to them to prefer a Man rather than a Wooden-headed Nonentity to Proclaim their Existence to the King's faithful Commons! Wherefore, at the next General Election I should lose my Seat, — which would

be Disagreeable to me personally, as well as a Cause of Rage in my Wife, to whom my present Condition of a Parliamentary Microbe is much more important and advantageous than it is to the Country! And Thou knowest, O Lord, that when my Wife is moved by the Impetuous Persuasion of a difficult Temper, it is necessary for me, by reason of her Superior Height, Size, and Aggressiveness, to retire from the domestic Fighting-ground, considerably worsted in the unequal Combat. Protect me, merciful Deity, from her Tongue! — which is as a Sword to slay all thoughts of Peace! And, concerning the accursèd ubiquitous Journalist-Reporter-Paragraphist-Correspondent-Attached-to-all-Newspapers Man, who, for my sins, wrote my "speech to the Electors" at a high charge, and agreed, — and therefore expects, to write all my other public utterances on the same terms, I beseech Thee, when he next waits upon me with his Bill, ready to Counsel or to Command, grant me the Strength and Courage to tell a more barefaced Lie than is habitual to me, and to boldly say that I can do Without him!

Amen.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGES

KING BUTTERCUP'S WEDDING
HOW JACK BUILT HIS HOUSE
THE SWIMMING SHOES
CHILDREN'S EVENING HYMN

KING BUTTERCUP'S WEDDING

AN EXTRAVAGANZA

IT is a long time ago since King Buttercup was married, so long that the most venerable Yew in the forest cannot remember anything about it, though it was a very grand Wedding and made a great sensation in the Flower-World. It took place in the beautiful meadows that surround the town of Stratford-on-Avon, where the greatest poet of all the world, Shakespeare, was born, — but it was long ages before either he saw the light or Stratford-on-Avon looked as it does now. Only the West Wind, who was really present at the ceremony, can give any exact account of it, and he told me all about it, just as I shall tell you. If you doubt the truth of the story, you must blame him, not me.

This is how it happened. On a beautiful May morning, just as all the early Spring flowers were awaking from their night's slumber, a big Bee, splendidly dressed in a costume of brown and yellow velvet, bounced suddenly on a spray

of syringa. He was one of the Town Criers in the employ of the Government, whose business it is to fly every morning from blossom to blossom, and relate every event that takes place in Flowerland, where as yet they have no newspapers. With a long, loud buzz, the Bee proclaimed: —

"Important! Special!! Startling news!!! His Gracious Majesty, King Buttercup, Monarch of Meadowland, is about to marry!!!! Marriage of the Monarch of Meadowland!!!!!"

At this, several lazy Forget-me-nots who had before felt inclined to take five minutes' more nap, became broad awake in a second, and opened their sleepy blue eyes wide in astonishment, while a group of highly cultivated Lilies of the Valley, instead of nodding drowsily on their green stems, drew themselves up with an air of offended dignity, — "The Monarch of Meadowland," said they; "What is he to us? A common wild flower — a weed — a nobody — called a king merely by courtesy. True, he rules over a small part of our country, but pooh! *we* would not be seen at his court!" — and they rustled their long leaves haughtily. The Bee rubbed his forelegs together thoughtfully for a second, and then observed —

"You spoke of a *small* part of our country, — why Meadowland is the largest kingdom in it!"

"Nonsense!" sharply exclaimed the stately Hyacinth. "It is an unexplored wilderness, — its king and people are nothing better than savages! Do not presume to argue with *us*, Sir Bee! *We* are the aristocracy!"

The Bee bowed humbly and was silent.

"Pray," inquired a dandy Tulip, languidly uncurling his leaves to the sun, "who is the lady destined to be the future Queen of Meadowland?"

"The fair Daisy," replied the Bee, "and report says she is as good as she is lovely."

A cluster of brilliantly-attired Crocuses here set up a shrill little laugh of contempt and derision.

"What, Daisy!" they exclaimed, — "that little fright! A dwarf! A model of ugliness! Well, the King's taste is not very refined!"

The Lilies, Hyacinths, and Tulips, together with some newly-awakened Jonquils, all joined in mockery of King Buttercup's chosen bride, and the poor Town Crier was losing patience with them, when he heard a sweet voice near him say —

"Good morning, Sir Bee! Your news delights me. I am always happy when I hear of the good fortune of others. Daisy has long been a dear friend of mine, and I heartily wish her joy. Come and tell me all about it."

Thus invited, the Bee gladly flew down to a bank of dewy moss, where dwelt the flower who spoke to him, the fair and gentle Violet. The other flowers were silent; they knew that though the Violet was really a native of Meadowland, yet there was no one more honoured at the brilliant court of their Queen, the Rose, than she was, and they dared not speak against Daisy, whom she thus publicly acknowledged as a dear friend. Meanwhile, the Violet, after hospitably giving the Bee some fresh honey for breakfast, listened with great interest to his account of the approaching festivities.

"Two thousand blue butterflies are commissioned by his Majesty," said he, "to be the bearers of the royal invitations to the marriage. You will no doubt receive yours in the course of the day. One million spiders are employed in weaving a canopy under which the bridal pair will receive their friends. The Daisy is to be attended by one hundred of the whitest

Anemones as bridesmaids, and the King will be escorted by the same number of selected Celandines. The Wedding will take place to-morrow at sunrise, in the centre of the green field that slopes down to the river yonder, and after the ceremony there will be a grand Banquet. In the evening a State Ball will be held in the King's Palace, to which many of the highest aristocracy will come, though the season for them is not yet begun. But many have consented to travel thither to do honour to the King — one Lily in particular is on her way from the Nile, travelling night and day in order to be present."

Here the Bee paused a moment, and rubbed his forelegs in great excitement. Not only Violet, but all the flowers near him were bending eagerly forward to listen to his account of the morrow's programme, and he went on —

"I am to be there with all the Worshipful Company of Town Criers, — we are to stand on each side of the path down which the King and his newly-made Queen will pass — and at a signal from our Chief, we shall all buzz together, which will have a grand effect. The Thrush has been asked to sing an anthem, but his voice has been so much admired, that he has become fanci-

ful and conceited, and always has a cold when he is wanted to sing. He say he has heard that if singers can manage to have a cold whenever it suits their caprice, they become more popular. But I must not stay any longer gossiping, or I shall never get through my business. I shall see you among the guests to-morrow. Good-bye!" and away flew the Bee buzzing as loudly as he could, for he felt very fussy, as most people do who have important news to tell. The Violet, left to herself, thought very much of her friend Daisy's good fortune, and looked forward with eagerness to the forthcoming festivities.

"Are you going to this absurd ceremony, Lady Violet?" inquired the same dandy, Tulip, who had before spoken to the Bee.

"Certainly, if the King invites me," she replied.

"Oh, we are all sure to be invited!" he exclaimed. "The vulgar little monarch will honour himself by pretending to know us and sending us his invitations; but I, for one, shall not trouble myself to go."

"Nor we," said the Lilies.

"Nor we," chorused the Crocuses.

"Well," gently said the Violet, "we need not decide what to do till the invitations come."

The sun was now high in the heavens, and all the fields and gardens were bright with life and activity. The birds warbled gaily on the budding green boughs, and hosts of gay insects with rainbow-tinted wings fluttered and danced in the fresh breeze. Many butterflies passed to and fro, some pure white, others pale yellow, others crimson, and some beautifully variegated; but as the messengers of King Buttercup were to be recognized by their blue costume, the other members of the tribe did not attract as much attention from the Flowers as usual. The hours passed on, and yet not a single blue butterfly appeared. Now, though Lilies, Crocuses, and Hyacinths had all derided King Buttercup and his bride, they were in secret very anxious to be invited to the wedding, which they knew well enough would be a grand affair, and they kept sharp watch for the first glimpse of the Royal ambassadors. At last, a faint flicker of pale blue wings appeared in the distance, and then the long expected procession of butterflies came floating swiftly through the air. Very brilliant and lovely they looked in the broad blaze of sunshine, and a linnet, perched up in a hawthorn tree, was so charmed with the sight that he com-

posed a song about it and sang it then and there with all his heart in it. The beautiful butterflies did not stop in their graceful flight for the Lilies, or the Crocuses, or any other aristocratic flower; they descended to the Forget-me-nots, rose again lightly and went on to the Violet, where three of them rested an instant, then on again, now and then fluttering down to give invitations to some modest field flowers almost hidden in the grass — sometimes poising on the white blossoms of the blackthorn, sometimes disappearing in the scented cups of early bluebells — away they flew bearing King Buttercup's message to his chosen guests, and in a few seconds they had left far behind them the brilliant cluster of cultivated flowers that had sneered so unkindly at the Monarch of Meadowland. The Hyacinths trembled with anger, and the complexions of the Crocuses grew even yellower in the extremity of their disappointment. But they said nothing, they knew well enough they had deserved the slight they had received.

The day passed, and the young May moon smiled radiantly down on sleeping Flowerland. The Violet, who had been greatly excited by receiving a royal invitation, and the Forget-me-

nots also, could scarcely close their eyes all night, and therefore they saw a party of the Fungus Elves practising their dances for the next evening. A pretty sight it was to see them all troop out from under the cover of the funguses which are their houses, and then to watch them gracefully skipping about in the moonshine. They were all dressed in brown and silver, and wore crowns of dewdrops, and nothing could exceed the activity and ease of their motions. Ten glow-worms lit up the grass on which they danced, and altogether it was a charming sight. Violet looked on at their fantastic capers till she fell unconsciously into a sound slumber from which she did not awake till the first streak of morning appeared in the east. A great noise of booming and buzzing then aroused her, and opening her dark blue eyes she saw that the Town Criers were all passing her dwelling on their way to the wedding. Looking around her, she observed the coquettish Forget-me-nots busily engaged in dressing themselves for the occasion, and what a fuss they made to be sure! They washed all their leaves, and were most particular to arrange a dewdrop in the centre of each one of their

blossoms. They certainly would have been the latest arrivals at the King's Palace had they not been reminded how time was going by a cross old grasshopper with a squeaky voice, who was hurrying off to the wedding as fast as he could go.

"There you are!" he grumbled, "dressing yourselves and muddling about, just as women always do. When are you going to start, pray? I suppose you'll arrive just as the ceremony is ended!" — And on he hopped faster than ever. The Forget-me-nots now hurried the finishing of their toilette, and the Violet hastily arose from her mossy couch. Putting on her richest purple robe, she summoned a fly (you can hire flies in Flowerland as you can in our world, only you do not pay them so much), and seating herself on his back, away she went to the marriage festival, and succeeded in reaching the meadow just as the King entered. What a scene it was to be sure! Such a vast concourse of flowers had never been seen assembled in one field before. They were all packed together as closely as they could stand, and all pressed eagerly towards one spot, where the spider-woven canopy was erected. And a wonderful canopy it was, finer than silk,

and studded thickly with dewdrops of all sizes that glittered like the rarest diamonds. Under it, King Buttercup sat on his throne waiting the approach of his bride. He was the cynosure of all eyes, and in truth he was a handsome little fellow. He wore a robe of cloth of gold, and on his head was placed a golden crown, and his bright face shone with happiness. Beside him stood his attendant groomsmen, the Celandines, together with several other distinguished Flower-people, many of whom bore titles of distinction. There was Count Dandelion, one of the handsomest soldiers in Meadowland, who had travelled in many countries, and, it was said, had saved many lives at the risk of losing his own. He looked very gorgeous in his showy uniform of pale green and gold, and he was engaged in what seemed to be a very interesting conversation with the beautiful Lady Pimpernel, who was one of the greatest belles and coquettes of the court. Then there was the Grand Duke of Borage who was flirting desperately with the young Duchess Eye-bright, and the gallant nobleman Lord Fox-Glove was busy paying most devoted attention to the graceful and fascinating Marchioness Meadowsweet. There were knights

and nobles in abundance, and in short all the rank, wealth and beauty of Meadowland had gathered to King Buttercup's wedding. Many were curious to see the bride, as few persons present knew what she was like, and all they had heard was that she was very small and shy and timid. But now there was heard a great clash of armour, and a brilliant regiment of Rose Beetles splendidly attired in green coats of mail appeared on the field and formed in two lines, one on each side of the King. Then came the Bees or Town Criers, and took their places; — after which a strain of sweet melody was heard, and lo! a skylark rose into the air, fluttering his pretty wings and singing as only skylarks can sing, with a clear joyous voice that made the very heavens ring with music. And perhaps it is because he sang so beautifully on this occasion, that ever since that time the skylarks that live in the fields and woodlands round about Shakespeare's Town are famous for their lovely clear voices, which break forth in a chorus of the most joyous melody in the world every year when Spring colours the trees green, and fills the meadows with flowers. They are, as they certainly must be, the descendants of that special

bird which carolled so merrily on the morning King Buttercup was married. He warbled the "Wedding Anthem" instead of the conceited thrush, and as he sang, all the blossoms rustled their leaves expectantly, for it was time for the bride to appear. A few seconds more of suspense and anxiety, and then a deepening murmur of applause and admiration ran through the dense crowd of Flowers as the fair Daisy entered. What a lovely little creature she was! — So simple, so pure and innocent; — so shy and sweet she looked in her snow-white robes, with her little golden bodice and crown! She was followed by her fair bridesmaids, the Anemones, but beautiful though they were, simple little Daisy outshone them all. King Buttercup rose from his throne and advanced to meet her — all the Bees buzzed, the Rose Beetles clashed their swords, and the Skylark sang louder and louder, hovering, like a living jewel in the sunshine, just above the Royal Canopy. Now as the little Daisy approached her kingly bridegroom, her great happiness and honour seemed more than she could bear, and a faint beautiful rose-blush tinged her tiny white petals. That is the reason why so many daisies are pink-tipped to this very

hour. The King bowed low and led her to his throne, — then, turning to his courtiers and friends, said in a small voice as clear as a bell, —

"Loving subjects! — It has seemed good to us that in order to maintain the honour and position of our Kingdom and State, we should take upon ourselves the solemn duty of matrimony. In choosing a partner for our Throne, we have not considered rank and wealth so much as virtue and goodness, and in all our search we have been unable to find a fairer or more modest maiden flower than the Daisy, whom we now have the honour to present to you as your future Queen. We feel confident that the many beauties of her mind and the sweetness and constancy of her character will enhance the value of our Throne and increase the happiness and prosperity of our Kingdom. Moreover, it has been made known to us that in days to come, that portion of Flowerland whereon we now grow and flourish will be made valuable and beloved to all the rest of the world by the presence of a far greater King than ourselves, — one who will lead the thoughts of men even as we lead the first golden blossoming-out of Spring. Therefore it shall be our duty to

make this centre of our realm beautiful with all the fairest thoughts of love and grace and innocence which can charm a Poet's fancy, and we here decree that these fields by the river shall be the beginning of all lovely fields in all lovely lands. None shall be more peaceful and pure, — none shall be more full of gold and silver bloom, — none shall be more delicately fragrant, or more sweetly surrounded by the singing of birds. Subjects, behold your Queen! Before you all, I proudly declare my love for her; — and from henceforth shall Buttercup and Daisy dwell together in loving hope to make the world brighter and happier for their blossoming!"

Loud cheers responded to the King's speech, and then the marriage ceremony commenced. The venerable Archbishop Ivy, glorious in his glossy green sleeves and quaintly twisted brown mitre, read the service and pronounced the Blessing, and then, as King Buttercup kissed Queen Daisy, there began a general "March past" of all the representatives of Meadowland. What a wonderful sight that was! The West Wind, who kept on blowing the news as hard as he could to all the four quarters of the globe, found it almost impossible to telegraph his

description of the scene fast enough, though he was generally admitted to be an excellent reporter. The procession was almost interminable, and lasted nearly all day. Then there was the wedding Breakfast which took place under a beautiful tent of gossamer-web, round which a thousand tall Cowslips, officers of the Royal guard, stood "at attention." Innumerable Ladybirds, in black and scarlet livery, ran about, waiting upon the King and Queen and their distinguished guests, and some specially selected Moths, in brown coats and white stockings, brought various kinds of honey-dew and sweet nectar to fill the Royal cups. Then came a grand dance, and the King, leading his fair Consort out, opened the Ball with her. All the flower-eyes were turned upon the Royal pair as they glided together over the green meadow in the light of the setting sun at the close of the long bright festival-day, — and on the very edge of the grass, as an uninvited spectator, stood the dandy Tulip who had sneered at the whole business of the marriage in the morning when he had first heard of it. Yes, there he was, twirling his petals just as some gentlemen twirl their moustaches.

"Upon my word!" he exclaimed — "The new Queen is not bad-looking!"

Jealous Lady Hyacinth, who had followed him, heard what he said and was very angry.

"Not bad-looking!" she cried in a little shrill voice — "How dare you, Sir Tulip! Do you not remember that you admired *Me* yesterday?"

"Ah, but that *was* yesterday!" drawled the Tulip — "You are all very well in your way, but you are heavy, my dear Lady Hyacinth! — large and heavy! — You do not wear well!"

"Dear me!" said a tall stately-looking flower-personage, attired in purest white and carrying a golden wand like a sceptre — "How you 'cultivated' persons quarrel! I have never seen worse manners even among the frogs in Egypt! Really, Lady Hyacinth, your relatives the Bluebells are much better behaved!"

Sir Tulip waved his leaves carelessly with a rakish air, and Lady Hyacinth trembled with rage, — for it was the Lily who had come all the way from the Nile who thus reproached them, and she was a great authority on deportment.

Meanwhile the Buttercup and Daisy danced on, and all the other field and woodland flowers

danced too, till the sun sank and the moon rose, and the meadows shone with the silvery reflections of a million fantastic and graceful forms that swayed to and fro in the wind like pretty gleams of pale sunshine on dark green water. The river murmured and plashed among the reeds — tall osiers nodded their heads in drowsy time to the flying feet of the flower-dancers, and little moor-hens paddled to and fro from one bank of moss to the other, gossiping and making their comments on the beauty and brilliancy of King Buttercup's State Ball. Higher and higher the moon climbed into the dark blue heaven, — the stars came out — and then the Laureate singer and Chief Minstrel of Meadowland, the Nightingale, began to sing. As soon as he tuned up his first rich liquid note, the dancing ceased, — and all the flowers stood stock still just where they were in the field and bent their heads to listen, while tears of dew filled their eyes. And King Buttercup and Queen Daisy, seeing all their subjects thus entranced, stole softly away together like the fond little lovers they were, and lay down to rest on a Royal couch of budding wild thyme and velvet moss. And the nightingale sang on

and on, — and the glow-worms came out and twinkled, and all the flowers fell asleep together, and their spirits wandered away to the beautiful Land of Dreams. And what they saw there, who shall tell? Queen Daisy rested her little head on the golden heart of her King, and they too folded themselves up closely and slept and dreamed, while the nightingale warbled a serenade and lullaby in one all the night long. It was a magical night, and a magical wedding; and the wonder of it all is that ever since then the fields have been full of buttercups and daisies, and we have grown to know them so well and love them so much that if they were taken away from us we should not know what to do, or how to replace them. And if you want to know the exact spot where King Buttercup's marriage took place, — well! — there is a corner by the river Avon, just between two beautiful bending willows, where you will find . . . But, no! — I will not tell you what you will find in that enchanted little nook. For if you know anything about Fairyland, you do not need telling!

HOW JACK BUILT HIS HOUSE

ACK told a lie.

That was the beginning of the foundation of his House.

There was no necessity for him to tell the lie. There never is really any necessity for telling a Lie, and no good ever comes of it. Yet Jack told it. He lied to those who loved him best, — to those who had given him all he had in the world, — to those who had done everything for him, and who had set their hearts on his turning out a true-hearted lad, and an honest man. Well, — he didn't think about those folks at all; — he simply thought about Himself. He wished to protect Himself from the consequences of an act of folly. And he thought the best way to do that was to tell a good, thumping Lie, and put it up as a sort of brazen shield between Himself and a disagreeable half-hour. So he told it, quite cheerfully, and with a delightfully candid air of truth, chuckling secretly to himself when he saw that

the people who loved him were foolish enough to believe him and trust to his honour.

He had, however, missed one awkward point in the matter. He did not know that the telling of one Lie would necessitate the telling of another to keep the first one up. But it was so. The first Lie was terribly unsafe at certain moments, and he was afraid that the foundation of his House would give in. However, the second Lie was easily invented, and the two false bricks in the human building were successfully set together with a little mortar of hypocrisy, and so steadied each other.

After that, things progressed quickly, and the House grew up so rapidly, and to such a size, that it seemed as if a whole army of little demon bricklayers and plasterers from the lower regions of the wicked had come of their own accord to assist Jack in carrying out his design. One on top of the other the Lies were set in order, till Jack became so delighted with the showy appearance of his building that he altogether forgot there was such a thing as Truth in the world. Lies became so much a part of his existence that he told them on every occasion.

From a Boy he grew, with his House, into a

Man, and went on lying. With an air of the most ingenuous candour he looked his neighbours smilingly in the face and lied to them all day long. He lied in business, he lied at home. He lied to friends, he lied to foes. Nobody knew where to have him, his lies were so cunningly and cleverly adjusted. When through dint of cheating, corruption, and fraud, he had managed to amass a large fortune through the ruin of others, he lied to Himself and said he was a good man. Thus you see he had nearly reached the top of the House he was building. Still entirely satisfied with his palatial Residence, he kept on adding a brick or two here, an archway there, an additional column or extra ornamental pinnacle in various directions, till at last, when he was getting on in life, and was beginning to be rather fat and pursy, he decided to put the Roof on. He went down to a great Money-market to do that, and floated a large company on a big Lie.

And so the Roof, all sparkling with gold and silver, was put on the splendid House that Jack built, and Jack went home to eat a gorgeous dinner within its walls, and take his ease for the remainder of his days.

But just as he arrived at the door of his grand Establishment, he saw a little beggar-lad, about as young as he had been himself when he first began to build. And this little beggar-lad, ragged and dirty and foot-sore, was actually presuming to stand in Jack's great entrance-hall as if he had every right to be there! — in fact, as if the house belonged to him! Jack was furious.

"What are you doing here, you rascal?" he spluttered. "How dare you come here? Who the devil are you?"

The little beggar-lad looked him full in the face, and did not budge an inch.

"My name is Truth," he said; "and I am here to knock down your House of Lies!"

Whereupon he raised his little child's hand — and lo! without any sound at all, but as rapidly as a heap of snow melting away in hot sunshine, the house that Jack built with so much care and concern crumbled to atoms and disappeared, leaving no trace of itself but a faint bad smell like the passing of an open dust-cart.

Now some people passing by looked at the blank space where it had once stood, and said: "Dear me! There used to be a House of

Lies here, and everybody thought it would last for ever!"

"Not everybody," said the little beggar-lad, as he stepped out among them: "only the Jack that built it!"

And with that he also disappeared.

And where was Jack? What had become of him? Well, he had fallen with the ruin of his House — and he must have died in a very strange and awful fashion; for just near the dust of the two first Lies he had set together in boyhood as a foundation for the after-building of his life there was seen a crawling Worm, writhing itself in and out through the wet mould. And the Worm was the coward Soul of a false lad who never became a true Man!

THE SWIMMING SHOES

A FAIRY STORY

ON a beautiful clear lake swam a large family of Ducks. At the head of them all was the Mother-Duck, quacking proudly, and all the ducklings tried to imitate her voice, which they considered superior to that of the nightingale.

"Quack! Quack!" said she — "We have had enough of the water to-day. Let us swim to shore and see what kind of dinner we can pick up."

Thereupon she turned briskly towards the land, and all her children dutifully followed her example, except the two youngest, who were very wilful and obstinate.

"What greedy creatures you are!" they cackled, — "Never can five minutes pass in peace without your wanting something to eat! We do not intend to come on shore; no! we shall remain here on the water and swim about by ourselves."

"Naughty children!" screamed old Mother-Duck — "Come to me directly! The first lesson of life is obedience to your parents, so just come on shore at once!"

"Oh, bother you!" replied the two rude young ducklings — "You are an old Silly! Yes — we repeat it, — an old Silly! You know nothing. What! Are we going to obey you? No, indeed! We are much too clever for that, — much wiser than you are, and that's the sober truth. So leave off scolding, if you please, for we mean to stay where we are."

Now under the waters of the lake lived a little sprite, a good fairy, who hated naughty, disobedient children, as all good fairies do. And when he heard the ducklings, how they talked so rudely to their mother, he determined to punish them for their ill-manners.

"Tiresome little things!" he thought — "They want a lesson; and a lesson, and a sharp one too they shall have!"

With this, in the twinkling of an eye, he turned them into a pair of wooden shoes, and threw them on the shore in a heap of sand and mud. There they lay, quite dumb and unable to move. The old Duck and the rest of her

family, seeing them disappear so suddenly, thought they had dived under the water to hide themselves. So without more ado, they waddled away with a great noise, cackling and lamenting over the wicked disobedience that had been shown by these two youngest ducklings to their Mother, who had been so kind to them. Meanwhile, they themselves lay in the mud quite still, no longer beautiful and shiny ducks, but only wooden shoes, and very ugly ones too.

The worst of it all was, that, shoes as they were, they suffered dreadfully from a desire to swim, and thus suffering they said to themselves, —

"Oh! if we could only get into the water! If some one would put us in — just for an instant!"

But they wished and sighed in vain, for an old peasant who was passing by at this moment caught sight of them and exclaimed, —

"Hullo! hullo! here are shoes! Yes, *shoes*, as I am a living man! Now this is what I call a lucky find!"

With these words he put them on, and walked away in the greatest state of excitement. But the shoes were much too small for him, — they

pinched his gouty toes and made him altogether very uncomfortable, so on reaching home he told his wife he had bought her a nice pair of wooden shoes.

"I hope they will fit you," he said — "I have often noticed, my dear, how the old shoes you wear let in the damp — now these will keep you warm and comfortable!"

The old wife tried them on. She was delighted with them. They fitted her to a T, as the saying is, and with hearty words and big tears of gratitude in her eyes, she thanked her tender husband again and again. He received these thanks in a very sly manner, for he knew in his heart that he did not altogether deserve them.

"I have," he said inwardly, "given her something which cost me nothing, — absolutely nothing!" But he kept this to himself and smiled very good-humouredly, and thought — "Yes, yes! She ought to be grateful — of course she ought. And she *is* grateful. Ha! ha! That is the best of it!"

The next morning the old woman went down to the river to fetch a pitcher of water, and on her way she observed that her shoes were very muddy.

"I will wash them in the river," she thought,

"and then my husband will see what care I take of them —"

No sooner said than done. The shoes were put in the water, — but what was her astonishment, and her fright too, when she saw them swimming away as fast as they could go! The fact is that the transformed ducks no sooner found themselves in the water than they felt compelled to swim, — to swim, as it were, for life and death. And on they went, and on and on, quite heedless of the poor old woman who sat down on the shore and cried bitterly. Her shoes had now gone away so far that they looked to her no bigger than bits of floating cork; and while she was lamenting and crying, her husband came suddenly upon her. When he was informed of what happened he gave her a good beating for letting the shoes go so easily, and then he starved her all day to make up (as he said) for the price of them. Ah! what a kind man he was!

Meanwhile the shoes went sailing away, and never once stopped to inquire where they were going, till suddenly they struck against some obstacle in the water. It was the blade of an oar, and they immediately saw that they were

close to a small rowing-boat, in which sat two children, — a girl of about ten or eleven years of age, and her brother, a sturdy lad some five or six years older. The little girl leaned over the side of the boat to see what had happened to the oar, and exclaimed, —

"Oh, look! A pair of shoes! A pair of wooden shoes! What a funny thing to find a pair of shoes in the sea!"

Laughing merrily, she reached out her hand, and caught the shoes, one after the other, and lifted them into the boat.

"They are actually quite new," said her brother, examining them with curiosity. "And I do believe they will just fit you. Try them on —" And he put one on his sister's little foot. It fitted beautifully, so she put on the other, and then both children laughed aloud, — clear ringing laughter, like the tinkling of silver bells in a sledge.

"This is a good day's fishing!" exclaimed the little girl. "Wooden shoes are not exactly pretty, but they are strong and useful, and these will save mother buying me a new pair. They come at the right time, too, for mine are worn into holes!"

As soon as the children landed, they ran home to tell their adventure. Their home was a hut on the sea-shore, and a very poor hut it was, for their father was only a fisherman, and they, with their mother, helped him to earn a living by making and mending the nets. The good mother smiled when she saw her little daughter return — she looked so bright and happy, and so proud of her wooden shoes.

"It is a lucky fishing," she said — "and I will say nothing to spoil your pleasure, my little one; though your father told me to give you and Denis a scolding — "

Denis flushed angrily.

"Why, mother?" he inquired — "Why should we be scolded?"

"Nay, Denis," said the mother gravely; "you should not ask, for you know the reason well enough. Your father has forbidden you to go out in the boat after dark, and yet you *will* do it, and what is worse, you take your little sister into the same danger as yourself, — and, as for you, Nanette," she added, turning to the child, who stood silent and ashamed, "I wonder how you can be so naughty! I have told you never to go out at night with your brother.

He does not know enough about the coast and the hidden rocks, on which many a brave ship has struck and foundered. But you are both so wild and wilful because you know I have too much to do to be always on the watch for your foolish pranks. You care nothing for your mother. Now that you are so pleased with the wooden shoes, I foresee what will happen. You will be always on the water, trying to find something else, — and some day you will both be drowned. Come, Nanette, be a good child, and promise me, at any rate, that you will not go out in the boat after sunset. Denis will not care to go alone, and so you will both be obedient. Come, come, promise me!"

"I promise you, mother," said Nanette in a low voice.

Denis said nothing, and both children looked sad and sullen. As for the wooden shoes, the excitement about them soon subsided, though Nanette continued to wear them all day, — but they themselves noticed how reluctantly the little feet of their wearer seemed to run on the various domestic errands required, — and in what a petulant humour the golden-haired little Nanette seemed to be.

Night came at last, and the lovely moon rode high in the heavens, looking as round and bright as a silver shield. Every tiny wavelet on the sea was tipped with light, and here and there a deeper line of radiance showed plainly where the phosphorescent fish were gambolling and darting to and fro under the water. On the shore stood Denis, the fisherman's son. He was stealthily at work, unfastening the moorings of his father's skiff, and every now and then he glanced towards the hut in fear lest his parents should be on the watch. But the little home was shut for the night, and all was dark and silent. Carefully and almost noiselessly, young Denis pushed the boat towards the edge of the water, and then he ran swiftly to one of the windows of the hut and tapped softly. In another moment Nanette appeared, and with her brother's help, she climbed through the window, and soon stood beside him. She wore her wooden shoes — and oh, how unhappy they felt! How they wished they could say, "Nanette! dear little Nanette! don't disobey your mother!"

But they could only creak a faint disapproval as she ran along the shore in eager and feverish haste to be out with her brother on that spark-

ling and beautiful ocean. Quite forgetful of her promise to her mother, she laughed in sheer enjoyment of her own naughtiness and wilfulness, and as Denis pushed out the boat and rowed quickly and steadily away from land, she clapped her hands in excitement and exclaimed, —

"Oh, what a lovely night! What a shame it would be to stay in bed while the moon is shining so brightly!"

"Yes," replied Denis, as he bent to the oars and rowed as swiftly as he could — "Father is very unkind to wish to prevent us enjoying ourselves. We do no harm."

"Besides," added Nanette, "even if the sea *did* get rough, you know how to manage a boat in a storm, don't you?"

"Of course," said Denis confidently — "But there's no fear of a storm to-night. We are safe enough."

As he spoke there came a sudden crash and crack — they had gone straight on a sharp rock! — a treacherous rock, hidden in the waves and unknown to any but experienced sailors. Their boat was splitting! The water rushed in — Denis looked about him in despair. They were

three or four miles from the shore — poor Nanette screamed loudly.

"Be quiet!" cried her brother; "I will save you, dear! I can swim!" And, flinging off all the clothes that might impede his movements, he threw one strong arm round his sister, who was now speechless with terror, and plunging boldly into the waves with her, made gallant efforts to reach the land. As they left it, their boat parted asunder and broke in pieces. Oh, what fearful moments were those in which the unhappy children struggled for life and death, battling with the cruel sea!

Thoughts of their mother, — the disobedience they had shown towards her, — the picture of her despair and sorrow when she should hear of their dreadful end, — all the little touching memories of home swarmed thickly in upon them, — and Nanette gasped for breath.

"Are we going to die?" she muttered feebly.

"Yes, dear," said poor Denis, "I am afraid so. My strength is going. I can't swim any more."

Then came a terrible moment, when all around them seemed of a blood-red colour — then it changed to a vivid green. The moon itself, the

sky, the stars, all became green as the green water, — then gradually the arms of Denis relaxed, and the poor children sank together, down, down to their deaths. The moon shone, and the stars sparkled as brilliantly as ever, and only the floating pieces of the little boat remained on the rippling sea. Only the wreck? — No — there was something else,— the wooden shoes! They had been loosened by the movement of the waves from the feet of the poor little Nanette, and there they were, on their travels as before. They felt dreadfully miserable, and were very much shocked and frightened at the sudden and tragic end of their late owner.

"She disobeyed her mother," thought they, — and they quivered and creaked as the water carried them along, for they remembered their own disobedience when they were ducklings; but they had not much time to think seriously, for they were now in the open sea, and they were obliged to go at a very rapid rate. After several days and nights of journeying without any fresh adventures, they arrived at a part of the ocean where a dreadful storm was raging. The sky was black as ink, and the thunder rolled and crashed among the clouds in a frightful manner.

Suddenly a blaze of red fire sprang up into the sky — then another and another, and the shoes saw they were signal rockets from a ship in distress. Swimming on and on, they at last perceived an enormous vessel rocking to and fro on the mountainous waves, and they heard her tall masts fall, splintered by the lightning. Suddenly there came a great crash, — a gurgling noise, — and then all was over. Now and then the shoes saw some unhappy creature struggling with the great waves for a few seconds and then sucked down in an abyss to certain destruction. They were very much terrified at this dreadful scene, and they were trying to swim out of it as fast as possible, when they found themselves clutched by a man's hand, probably in mistake for a plank or spar. The man was in the last agonies of drowning, and as he released his grasp of the wooden shoes, a flash of lightning illumined for a moment his ghastly and contorted features. Struggling to lift himself above the riotous and lofty billows, he cried, "Mother! mother! forgive my long disobedience!"

And with this last supreme effort of strength, the unfortunate sailor sank and was lost for ever.

The wooden shoes were now completely horrified at the awful sights it had been their lot to see.

"What an experience!" they said to themselves — "Oh, how much better to be ducks than shoes! Surely no happy duck in a pond ever witnessed such scenes! The life of a duck in a pond is so peaceful — so placid!"

"Oh, if they had never disobeyed their good, kind Mother-Duck," they thought! — but, in spite of their recollections, they were compelled to go swimming on as they were, and so they got carried by a cross current out of the ocean down a great river, and out of the great river into a smaller one, and out of that into a lake, — a beautiful clear lake which they seemed to remember. As they floated along pleasant memories came into them, and they felt as if something strange was about to happen.

Suddenly they saw a beautiful duck with shining feathers coming towards them, and they nearly jumped out of the water in their excitement, for they moaned creakily to themselves, —

"We were ducks once! we were ducks once!"

"Yes," said a soft voice near — "Poor little

Nanette was alive once, but she disobeyed her mother, and now where is she?"

The shoes trembled in the water, and then said to themselves, —

"If we could be ducks again, we would never disobey our mother!"

Scarcely had they thought this than they felt a most curious change coming over them, and ere they had time to consider what it was, lo and behold! — they saw themselves mirrored in the water, two beautiful plump ducks, with rainbow-tinted plumes and sleek shining heads, swimming gracefully along!

"Quack! quack!" they said — "Now we know where we are! This is the same lake where we were born, and where we used to float, — and there is our dear home, over there by the shore! Let us find our mother, and we will never disobey her again!"

And neither they did. They were heartily welcomed home; and their strange adventures served to amuse the whole farm-yard for several months, though a cross old Turkey-cock was one day heard to gobble out, —

"I don't believe they were ever shoes at all! When they disobeyed their mother, they lost

themselves and got frightened; — then they hid away for a time, and came back with an absurd story they just invented to make themselves look important!"

But whoever pays attention to the gobblings of a Turkey-cock?

CHILDREN'S EVENING HYMN

IN our hearts celestial voices
Softly say:
"Day is passing, Night is closing,
Kneel and Pray!"

Father, we obey the summons,
Hear our cry!
Pity us, and help our weakness,
Thou Most High!

For the joys that most we cherish
Praised be Thou!
Good and gentle art Thou ever,
Hear us now!

Coming morrow we may never
Live to see;
All we ask Thee is to keep us
Safe with Thee!

May our dreams be of Thy kingdom
Bright and fair;
Where at last we hope to meet Thee,
Free from care.

Now the stars are shining o'er us
In the skies;
Looking like the watching Angels'
Loving eyes.

Softly now and slowly dying
Ends our strain, —
Grant that we may in Thy kingdom
Sing again.

There, when all our strife is over,
Sin forgiven,
May we dwell with Thee for ever
Up in Heaven!

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00014703950